

Lesson 55 Sutra of Infinite Meanings (无量义经 Wu Liang Yi Jing)

dated 24 June 2021



(Based on a **direct transcript** from the **recording** of the Dhamma Talk Conducted by Bro. Teoh Kian Koon at his Thursday Dhamma class dated 24 June 2021)

Donated by:

Kalyāṇamitta funds of Bro. Teoh Kian Koon
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

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(Biodata of Bro. Teoh Kian Koon)

Bro. Teoh graduated from University of Malaya in Civil Engineering in 1979. He has been a **spiritual practitioner** cum '**Meditator**' since 1971. Since his retirement in 2001 from his **Engineering career**, he has been **sharing** his **understanding** and **experiences** with those who are **keen** in their **search** for **true happiness, peace** and **liberation** from **birth** and **death** and all **mental suffering**. With these **understanding** it is hoped that they can become **more virtuous, nobler, and wiser** so that they **can** be a **blessing** to all. He gives **dhamma talks** and holds **meditation** classes & retreats and weekly **Dhamma classes** at various meditation centres, Buddhist societies and places that invite him.

For *more details* of *Bro. Teoh's dharma activities* and his *Kalyāṇamittaship grouping* please login to his *dharma website* at: <http://broteoh.com>

1 Preface

It is Brother Teoh's **sincere** wish that Dharma friends, spiritual practitioners, seekers of truth, and cultivators will be able **to make use** of the enclosed dharma **transcript notes** to develop a **better understanding** of the **Buddha Dhamma** as taught by the Buddha so that they may **progress** along the **path of dharma** to become more **virtuous, nobler, and wiser** human beings to be a **blessing** to all of humanity and the world.

As these notes were mostly **compiled** based on a **transcript** from the recording of the **lesson 55** of the **Sutra of Infinite Meanings** dhamma class (dated 24.6.2021); the text is aligned as closely as possible to the **colloquial speech** in the talk. **However, some editorial amendments** have been **made** to the **text without detracting** from the **essence** of the talk. With this, it is hoped that readers can accordingly **adjust** themselves to **better understand** its **true meaning** and **intent**. A **good** way to do this is **to listen** to the recordings **first before** reading the transcript notes.

To listen to the **recording (audio file)** you can log on to our <http://broteoh.com> **website** under **Repository** of *Dharma material* OR **Google** '*Bro. Teoh's Kalyāṇamittas – A Repository of Dharma Material*' to view them.

2 Acknowledgement

It is the donors' **sincere intentions** that these *dharma transcript notes* be shared with those who are **interested** and have the **affinity** to receive them. I would like to *take this opportunity to thank* and **rejoice** in the **generosity** and **wholesomeness** of all those **Dharma friends** or **Kalyāṇamittas** who have **donated** and **helped** in the **transcription, formatting, proofreading, publishing etc.** to make this **free distribution** of **dharma dāna** possible.

Special thanks should be accorded to Sister **Lim Eng Bee, Dr Jayanta, Sister Han Poh Cheng** and Sister **Chew Poh Lian** who had volunteered and taken the **initiative** to help prepare the **draft transcripts** for my **subsequent editing** thereby enabling this **dharma transcript book** to be printed.

By the **power of all these wholesomeness**, may all beings be **well and happy, free** from all mental and physical sufferings and dangers and may there be **love, peace and joy** - deep **within** their hearts. And may it also **pave the way** for there to be **causes and conditions** for all dharma friends who have **donated or helped** in one way or another to **realize** their **good and noble wishes/aspirations** soonest possible.

With Metta always,
Brother Teoh Kian Koon
(Dated: 30th July 2021)

3 Lesson 55 of The Sutra of Infinite Meanings dated 24th June 2021

3.1 Pre Pūjā sharing

Notes:

Black: Brother Teoh sharing (to expand on its deep meaning)

Blue (underlined): is the original texts of the book and

Light Blue (italics): Brother Song's sharing in Mandarin and English

3.1.1 Awareness based Meditation

Greeting by Brother Teoh: A very good evening to all brothers and sisters in the dhamma. Today is 24th June 2021 (Thursday's Class). We will continue with our sharing from this book 'The Essence of Infinite Meanings' Teachings from the **Adapted Verses** of The **Sutra of Infinite Meanings**. We are at page 277.

As usual, we will have our half an hour of **awareness-based meditation**. We will turn off the lights and you can proceed with your meditation. Just **relax** the body and **mind** and **maintain** some **form of attention**. To **develop** this **awareness-based meditation** is **very simple**, when you understand. What we need to do is, **to silent** our mind. **Relax** the body and mind, then just **maintain awareness** until the **awareness nature** becomes **very stable**. In between, **whatever arises; let it arise**. It can be a **thought**, it can be **saṅkhāra**, it can be whatever form and mind activity, tactile or consciousness. **When they arise, just let it be**. "**Aware – finish! Aware – finish!**" **Do not** continue to **create thinking**. **Do not follow** whatever **phenomena** or

activity that arise; any **mind state** that **arises**, especially the **aggregates** of mind (Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa). As for the **movement of thoughts** you **just relax**, maintain **awareness** and **silent everything** to **just observe** them. Understanding will arise.

When developing this **awareness-based meditation**, just **aware**, **do not try to know**, **do not try to do anything** so that you **can realize** your **true mind** (your **silent mind**). When your **awareness nature stabilized**, all the **saṅkhāra activities** (thought processes) will **cease**. When all the **saṅkhāra activities** and **thought processes ceased**, that is your **true mind**; your **silent mind** (the **awareness nature** within). That one, is the **unconditioned, unborn**. When you are just **aware**, that is your **true mind**, your **meditative mind** that **can meditate** and **insight** into **phenomena**; that can awaken and develop the **true understanding**. That **nature can see** and **insight** into phenomena, can **awaken**, can **observe to understand** what is going on **within** the **form and mind**. **Through** all this **observation** and the **awakening**, it can **come to understanding** profoundly: Who we are and what we are? We call that **'self-discovery'** or **'self-knowledge'**. **Through** all these **understanding** we will have a **clear understanding** of **what this form and mind** is all about. What the human being is all about, and what is it that is **beyond** this form and mind, - the **nature within**. Once you can **establish** all this **with clarity** and **understanding**, you will **clearly comprehend** the **Buddha's teaching**, the **Buddha-Dhamma**. True **Buddha-Dhamma** can only arise when you are **able to meditate** with your **silent mind**, your **true mind**.

So, remember the **first** of the **four supports** for **awareness-based meditation**. First support - **relax** into **every mind state** that **arises**. **Body and mind relax**. Then second support - **silent everything** to

maintain awareness. Third support is to **maintain the awareness for as long as you can.** Of course, lastly is **trust.** Trust your **own nature** to do the **meditation.** With this I will set the alarm for 30 minutes, and you all can continue with your meditation. After the alarm triggers, I will ring the bell three times. Upon **hearing the bell, slowly** and **mindfully** come out of the **meditation.** Try to **maintain** whatever **inner peace,** inner **calmness,** and inner **awareness** that you **have developed.** Use those **mind-states** to **live life,** to **develop daily mindfulness,** to **cultivate** your **daily religious routine.** This is how you can **maintain** your **faith,** your **diligence,** and your **sincerity** to **progress** along the **path** of dhamma. Meditation.....

Ting! x3 (End of 30 minutes of **awareness-based** Meditation).

3.2 Post Meditation Dhamma sharing

Okay, you can be seated, we shall continue from where we stopped, we are at page 277, at the adapted verse of this book, “**The Essence of Infinite Meanings**”. This teaching is **very beautiful** because **all these teachings** are from the **adapted verses** of the “**Sutra of Infinite Meanings**”. I will read on.

“The dharma is like water” which can wash away defilements. Whether water comes from a well, a pond, a stream, a river, a brook, a channel, or the great ocean. It can cleanse. The dharma-water that washes away defilements is also like this. Though varying in appearance, the nature of water is the same. So, too, is the nature of the Dharma. Though the [appearances of] water differ, all water can still cleanse. [Similarly, Dharma-water] can wash away afflictions and habitual tendencies. Thus, the Buddha turned the Dharma-wheel of the Four Noble Truths (3 times) and taught that all things have always been empty and still.”

3.2.1 Empty Nature of Existence

So, this is a **very profound** teaching. The **phenomenal** world, within our **existential** world, is not what you think. Because basically their **universal characteristic** is **empty and still**, that is our **True Nature**. But from there everything arises. That is why when they arise, **all these phenomenal worlds of consciousness**, they can **deceive** and

delude our **mundane mind**. So, living beings become entangled because they do not have the **clarity** of mind, to **see** all these **clearly**, to **understand** what is **going on**.

They **fail** to **understand creation**. How does creation come to be? They are **all dependent originating** phenomena, **condition arising, causal** phenomena. Their **universal characteristic** is **impermanent**, that is why it is **not a permanent unchanging entity**, “hey no you, hey no me”. If you attach and cling, (wanting things your way, which is **not in accordance with nature's way**), suffering will be the result. Because it is impermanent, that is why it is “**anattā**” - **non-self, empty, no reality**. “Empty” here does not mean there is nothing. “Empty” here means **there are things happening** within **life and existence**, but **ultimately** it is **empty** (Empty nature of Existence). Ultimately it is **empty**, no reality, “hey no you, hey no me”; whatever happens - they are just **dependent-originating, conditioned arising phenomena**. *It arises when there are conditions, it sustains itself when conditions continue to support it, and when conditions cease to be, it ceases to be*. Then after that what happens? - no more, Gone! Dead and gone! Right? Hence **no reality** at all, that is why it is **empty**.

There is a saying in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is very good. It said, when **we come** to this **existential world**, this **universe**, we **came empty-handed** (來也空) (lái yě kōng); then when **we leave** this universe, when our form and mind disperse, we also leave **without** taking anything along (去也空) (qù yě kōng). That is why, “you come empty, you go empty”. Then **why do living beings**, through **delusion, grief** over **emptiness** in between. So, this is a very beautiful saying.

The Mandarin version (if you can understand) is better. Because the way it is **expressed**, brings **out** the **meaning**.

When I was young, I heard these sayings before - in one of the swordsmanship cinema shows. There was a powerful, and violent elderly swordsman, trapped by three senior monks, down a chamber in the Shaolin Temple. The senior monks were chanting this Mahāyāna sutra to tame the elderly swordsman, then I came across these above verses. Every day they were chanting this Mahāyāna sutra, for him to **develop** the **understanding** to **change**. They kept on chanting: “來也空，去也空，那么施主何必苦苦，为空流泪呢!” (Lái yě kōng, qù yě kōng, nà me shī zhǔ hé bì kǔ kǔ, wèi kōng liú lèi ne!) It means: **when you come, you come empty and when you leave/go, you also leave/go empty; then in between (while living life), why do you grieve over emptiness? This is real DELUSION, isn't it? After hearing this chanting for some time, this swordsman developed wisdom and change for the better.**

So **do not cling** onto things, **hold-on** to things. Ultimately, the **form**, the **physical body** goes the **way of nature**. Old age, sickness, and death are **nature's** phenomena. These are the **realities** of **life and existence within the conditioned world**. We **need to experience** them; we **need to understand** their **realities**. So that we are **not deceived** by them. So that we will **not deludedly cling** and **hold on to** the form and mind; **believing** that it is **what we are**. If you do that then it is **self-delusion**. That is the reason why the Buddha in His final summary of the First Noble Truth, He said: ***In short, all sufferings arise because of our Self-Delusion. When living beings deludedly cling, grasp and attach to the Five Aggregates of Form and Mind, it***

will become **grasping aggregates**, that *will condition sufferings*. These “**upādāna khandha**” (**grasping aggregates**), are sufferings. When you **have developed** the **wisdom**, the clear **understanding** (after **having insight** into **phenomena** to **clearly awaken** to its **universal characteristics**), then all these will **become** truly clear to you. **Self-Knowledge** becomes **truly clear**. Then we will understand, “*who are we, what are we?*” What is this form and mind all about? What is this **human being** all about? When we **investigate**, what is this **human being** (as taught by the Buddha) we can **develop clear understanding**. He sub-divided this (human being) into the **five aggregates of Form and Mind** (nāma & rūpa).

3.2.2 The 5 Aggregates of Form and Mind

There are **two aspects** to the five aggregates of form and mind:

- i) **First aspect** is as a **human being**. As a human being, we have a **physical body**, which is the **form aggregate** (the physical form) and we have the **consciousness, trapped inside**. In this consciousness, there are **four (4) more aggregates** of mind. That mind (the mundane mind) or thought consciousness, **can feel, perceive, arise activities** of mind (saṅkhāra activities) and become **conscious** (conscious of what we see, hear, smell, etc.). So, we have the **feeling** (vedanā), **perception** (saññā), **mental activities** (saṅkhāra) and the **consciousness** (viññāṇa) **aggregates**. Whatever the **mind can do** (all its mental movements and activities), is the **contents** of consciousness, and this content of consciousness is basically the **saṅkhāra** aggregate. **Feeling** and **perception** are also part of the saṅkhāra aggregate. Our mind can

become **emotional**, can develop **mental states, mental intention, formations, or images, etc.** It can also **plan, scheme, dream, create thoughts, etc.** All these are **contents of consciousness**. And finally, the mind can also **become conscious** (Conscious of what we see, hear, smell, taste, tactilely feel and think). So, these are the **four aggregates** (of mind) and together with the **physical form aggregate** we have the **1st aspect** of the **5 aggregates of Form and Mind**. The first aspect of the five aggregates of form and mind, is as a human being. And according to the Buddha, these five aggregates of form and mind are **impermanent**, they **go the way of nature**. Because it is impermanent, it is **not a permanent unchanging entity** that you can **cling** onto, **hold-on** to and **grasp** onto via saying **this is me, this is I, and therefore I can own all these things**, and all these can be mine. This is **sakkāyadiṭṭhi, Self-Delusion**, so, please do **WAKE UP!** This form and mind are just **a karmically conditioned vehicle** and **tool** for us **to come** to this **existential** world; to live **life**, to experience **life**, to go through the **karmic process**, to **fulfil our vows** and **experience** whatever we want to **experience**, while **living** in this existence. So **do make full use** of it, but **do not be deluded** by it. This form and mind are for us **to use**. **Understand this** and **see this clearly**, then you will **understand** the **secret of life**, and you will **awaken!** Then you will have **no more problems, no more suffering**. So, **meditation** is to **uncover** this **secret**. When you **silence** your **mind**, **maintain mindfulness** and **awareness**, you can see them clearly.

ii) 2nd aspect: as the mental 5 aggregates of Form and Mind

This second (2nd) aspect of the five aggregates of form and mind, you can see them, when you are **mindful** and **aware**. Because every moment when we are **conscious**, when **we live life**; we need to **manifest consciousness**. Every moment of **seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting** and **tactile** feeling or **thought process**, this **mental consciousness** arises. When they arise, if you are **mindful** and **aware**, you can see the **2nd aspect** of the **five aggregates of form and mind** very clearly. We know, **we need a mind**, we need **sense bases** to **arise consciousness**. Upon **contact**, (of course together with the sense data); the **respective sense door consciousness** arises. But when we are **mindful** and **aware**, amid **life**, in **meditation**, then we **can see** all these **arising** clearly. That is, how it happened following the **dependent origination** process, the **12 Links** (or the **Paṭicca Samuppāda**) teaching as taught by the Buddha. This is **very profound** and incredibly beautiful. So, when you see the **aggregates** of mind, having these four abilities of *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* then you will also come to understand how the **external form enters the mind** (through the **aggregate of perception**).

This **aggregate of perception** brings the **external form** into the mind. So, when these five come together, we call it a **THOUGHT**. This is what the **second aspect** of the **five aggregates of form and mind** is all **about**. It is just a **THOUGHT**! The **consciousness aggregate** is the **pure consciousness** or **receptacle** before the **content of consciousness** is **input** into it to **form** the thought.

Our **true mind** is initially just **spacious awareness** without a **Centre** that can **create** and **manifest consciousness** when there is **contact** between **sense bases, sense data** and the **true mind**. Take for example seeing consciousness – seeing the Buddha rūpa. When we **perceive** something (can be the Buddha rūpa or anything else) through **our seeing**, what happens? We **shrink** our **spacious awareness** into a **small, limited space** to perceive the Buddha rūpa then we **input** our **content of consciousness** thereby forming a **thought**. Reason why J Krishnamurti said, **thought is limited** and **Egoic**. If you are **mindful** and **aware** you can **see** and **understand** all these.

That is why if you **grasp and cling** onto **this thought**, the **five (mental) aggregates**, it becomes **grasping aggregates**, the Buddha called it **Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, Self-Delusion**. That is **how you suffer!** That is how you **entangle** yourself, **react** to sense experience, and **become emotional**. You become **fearful, unhappy**, you **think** you **exist**, you **think** you are **real**. That is the true Dharma. So, **silent** your mind, develop **mindfulness**, to **understand** all these, to **observe** all these, leading to **Self-Knowledge** via **Self-Investigation**. When **you look within**, you **are aware**; then you will come to **understand** how you **function** as a **human being**; how the **mundane** mind **arises** and **creates** all these things. That is why the Buddha said, our **mundane mind** is the **forerunner** of all **things**. **When mind arises**, all things **arise**. The Buddha called this “Mano”. Mano is the **mundane mind**, the **thinking mind**, and this is **Not** the **real mind**, **Not** the **True Mind**. There is **another nature** within us, which is the **unconditioned**, the **unborn**, that has the **“awareness nature”**. But it is **not a being**, it **cannot come out** and **live life**. That is why it is **not easy** to **develop** the

understanding, it is **not a clear-cut thing**. To realize the **True Mind**, the **True Nature**, is also **not easy**. You **need to meditate**, you **need to** completely **silent** your mind, until **No Thought, No Movement, No Activity** until Everything **returns** (to its original state) and **becomes still** and **tranquil** with **clarity** within. **Just aware, that is!** This **demands** a lot of **patience**. So, this is the **summary** of what you need to understand. Hopefully, this can help you all to develop the **awakening**.

We shall go back to the adapted verse. We will read from there (page 277). This adapted verse did not explain all the above, that is the reason why I must explain all these to you so that you all may understand its **deep meaning** and why the **Sutra of Infinite Meanings** said, “Basically when the **Buddha** turned the **Dharma Wheel** of the **Four Noble Truths** 3 times, He **taught** to **living beings** that **all things** have **always been empty** and **still**”. To understand this is **not easy**, because it is **very profound**. That is the reason why I need to explain this to you all, through using the **basic Essential Dharma** that the Buddha has taught us. Just now, what I had shared (the explanation/summary) is **very complete**, so hopefully, after the **recording comes out**, you all can listen to it, to **develop** a **clear understanding**, then **meditate to realize** it. You will **become very beautiful**, then **my nature** will rejoice and Sādhu you all.

Okay now we will start reading from the commentaries.

[Whether the water is from a well, a pond, or a river, the nature of water is the same. It can wash away filth and dirt. People's true nature is inherently pure](#) (this is very true). [However, as it becomes tainted by habitual tendencies](#), (because this is how delusion sets in

until it becomes so habitual) [this true nature becomes covered and defiled](#). It means clouded and defiled. This word “defiled” used here, if you cannot understand, you may think, that ‘Nature’ can become defiled. No, that **Nature** can only be **obscured** or **clouded** but it **cannot** be defiled. Just like the **clouds**, when they are there, you **cannot see** the sun. Or the **sun rays cannot shine forth**, that is why it is **clouded/obscured**. But the **sun ray is always there**, that **Nature is always there, ever shining, ever radiating**. That **Nature is undefiled**. The word “defiled” is meant for the **mundane mind**. The **mundane mind** through its own **delusion, sakkāyadiṭṭhi**, gets **defiled**. When it **gets defiled**, means it has the **wrong view**, that **can condition evil roots** to arise, thereby making them evil because the evil roots are the roots of all evils. When you have the **three evil roots of greed, hatred, and delusion**, you become **evil**; the form and mind become evil, the mundane mind becomes evil. That is why the Buddha said, “Mind is the forerunner of all things, Mind is chief...”. When you **tend towards evil** following **dharmapada verse 1**, the **mind becomes evil**. When you **develop Heedfulness, Right View, Right Understanding**, and **tend towards wholesomeness** following **dharmapada verse 2**, the **mind becomes wholesome, virtuous, and beautiful**.

[Just as water can wash away filth and dirt, the Dharma can subdue habitual tendencies and enable everyone’s inherently wholesome nature \(true nature/true mind\) to appear](#). (Our **inherent true nature** is very **beautiful, very pristine, fully aware**.) [Due to the physical restrictions in its environment, there are different names and appearances for water](#) (depending on the condition, it can be) -- [streams, springs, brooks, rivers, etc](#). [Although the names and appearances are different, the fundamental nature of water is the](#)

same. The nature of the various kinds of Dharma, like the nature of various forms of water, **does not differ.** “Though the [appearances of water differ, all water can still cleanse. [Similarly, all **Dharma-water**] can **wash away afflictions and habitual tendencies.**” (Although it is used in this way in their description here, in fact, when you **develop the cultivation**, there is **no such thing** as “**Dharma-water**” **washing away** the **filth, defilement, affliction**. It is the **awakening** of the **mundane mind**. The **mundane mind realized itself** and **awakened** then **ceased** to be **deluded**. That wisdom is the one that **liberates and frees** the **mundane mind**. So here **water is just an analogy** and the reason why they use “water” is, maybe it is **easier** for **people** to **understand** that **water** can **cleanse**. So, in that sense, dharma is also like water, can wash away affliction and habitual tendencies. **But when it comes to actual cultivation**, it is **not** about water. It is about **wisdom** and **understanding**. So, bear in mind that understanding. Do not be gullible. Like reading the textbook here and **becoming confused because**: *“the textbook said Dharma-water, but how come when I cultivate, I cannot find Dharma-water”*. So, you will be doubly confused if you had that type of wrong view or delusion.

I will read on.

We engage in spiritual practice precisely, to wash away our afflictions and conquer all the deep-rooted habitual tendencies (the author also knew, it is **very difficult** to root out **habitual tendencies** which are **deep-rooted**. Because it had been there for so long, aeons and aeons of **birth** and **death, habitual tendencies, delusion**, the **thicket of views, opinions, conditioning, belief system**, - they are **not easy** to **root out**. To do that you need **Dharma understanding, unique wisdom** borne of **Direct-Seeing** leading to **direct awakening**. That is

why you should read the **Sabbāsava Sutta**, (sutta on all the Defilements/Taints, MN 2) on Knowing and Seeing. According to Lord Buddha, the **complete removal or eradication** of “āsava” **can only happen** in one **who sees** and one **who knows** or **one who knows and one who sees**. It can never happen in one who does not see and does not know because this is referring to the **Direct-Seeing** and the **Awakening**, the **Understanding**. So, to completely root out defilement, removal of “āsava”, you need **wisdom, nothing** else. This aspect is very important.

I will read on.

[We engage in spiritual practice precisely, to wash away our afflictions and conquer all the deep-rooted habitual tendencies that we have accumulated through our transmigration in the Six Realms.](#) (This Six Realms transmigration, 六道轮回 [Liùdào lúnhuí]; has happened for very long period; that is why it is described as over aeons and aeons of Cycle of births and deaths or Saṃsāra).

[Thus, we are like archaeologists digging out thousand-year-old ruins or stone and bronze tools from layers of sand and dirt. These ancient artefacts were not buried in the ground by humans, they were buried by natural disasters or through the accumulation of sand and dirt over long periods of time. In the desert the environment changes by the second, the formations of sand shift like ocean waves and tides. This is because a grain of sand is so tiny that it can be carried and spread by the wind. When there is a strong wind, sand from the Mongolian desert can be blown to Beijing, or even to Taiwan. So, we can see the potential power of sand and dust. Habitual tendencies are like sand and dust, which will continuously cover our own innate](#)

nature. Therefore, we must **have firm resolve** and **perseverance to** “wash away all afflictions and habitual tendencies.” (That's why you must make the resolve, the inspiration, the vows, the adhiṭṭhāna, and persevere with faith and sincerity to walk the path of Dharma, to cultivate; **otherwise**, this **spiritual path** is **not easy**. Okay I read on.)

In life, because the mind is influenced by external temptations, (this is **very true**. If you are a **true cultivator**, you will understand this. The mind is influenced by external phenomena that **tempt** you, that **lure** you; external temptation can lure the living beings, they can cause you to attach, to cling, to grasp and give meaning.) It produces cravings, internal struggles, and other desires, all of which lead to the creation of karma. (That is why they have **karmic** implications and consequences) But in the end, we are still subject to the laws of nature; (that is why ultimately it is still the laws of nature) all things have always been empty and still, so this physical existence will eventually come to an end. Yet the Buddha taught us that everything and every phenomenon in the universe contains a wondrous intrinsic nature. Although the forms and appearances may differ, this **intrinsic nature** remains the same. Take burning wood as an example, did the wood ignite the fire or did the fire ignite the wood? It is hard to draw a distinction because they are ultimately of the same essence. The Dharma is truly inconceivable. Actually, wood is just wood, how do we know that it has the potential to produce fire? Even in ancient times, primitive people knew that they could ignite a fire by rubbing wood sticks together. So, it is clear that humans inherently have wisdom; wisdom is not something that only arises after hearing the Buddha's teachings. We all have this wisdom, so after the Buddha attained enlightenment, He simply hoped to guide sentient beings

back to their innate nature. (That is why you must realize your **true mind**, your **true nature** within) That's why He taught the Four Noble Truths and expounded the Twelve Links of Cyclical Existence. (The Law of Dependent Origination, that explains clearly how our mind functions. This Paṭicca Samuppāda or Law of Dependent Origination, is very profound, very important. When you see (this law) clearly you will awaken! Because **everything is dependent originating**, condition **arising**, causal **phenomena**, **not** what you think. **Empty** and **still** ultimately! His purpose was always for us to penetrate the truths of life, and thus form aspirations to actualize the Six Pāramitās / Perfections in all actions so that we can enter and experience the True Dharma. (This is absolutely true. So, the purpose of the teaching is always for **living beings** to **penetrate** the **truths** of life. To **see truth**, to **see reality**, to **awaken** to the **universal characteristics**; and after that you **make aspirations** to **walk the Bodhisattva Way**, to **actualize** the **six perfections** in all actions so that you **can enter** and **experience** the **True Dharma way**. So, these are all very **beautiful descriptions** of the **teaching** and the **cultivation**).

3.2.3 Next Adapted verse preview

Pure water is like the Dhamma. The Dhamma can conform to conditions and capabilities and distinguish between all things. Thus, we realised that pure wisdom is in all places and encompasses all things. A stream, a river, a spring and a well all have different names. The nature of their water is the same; it nourishes and eliminates defilements. However, the Three Dhammas, Four Fruits and Two Paths are not the same.

So, all these are very **beautiful**. Basically, the **dhamma** is very **beautiful**. If you look at the word “dhamma” the understanding is, it is the **teaching** of the Buddha. That is why we call it the **Buddha-Dhamma**. But what is **Dhamma**? Dhamma is **truth** and **truth** are **nature’s laws** that **govern life** and **existence**. Whatever that **can explain the way things are**, is the **truth**. That is why He taught us the **Dhamma** (the essential truth), the truth that **we need to understand**. So Dhamma is especially important.

Pure water is like dhamma. Here the description is very good. Then this dhamma conforms to condition and capabilities and distinguishes between all things. Thus, we realized that pure wisdom is in all places and encompasses all things. This is a **very beautiful description of dhamma**. Then I would like to add on. Maybe this is for your own understanding. In fact, we **need dhamma** to have **wisdom**. We **need dhamma** to **develop understanding**, so that we **understand life**, we understand **who we are, what we are**. Dhamma is like our **spiritual solution** or **spiritual medicine** that can help **humanity** or **living beings** **overcoming** all their **life problems** or **situations**. It can help us to **understand life** and **live life** to the **fullest**, **experience life** to the **fullest** and **give meaning** to **life**.

So, **without dhamma**, **suffering** would be **the result**. **Dhamma**, if it is **so important**; why not **cultivator** or **practitioner** and **Buddhist** in general **see the beauty** and **importance of Dhamma**! Then **go all out to cultivate** this **Buddha-Dhamma** to develop the **required understanding, wisdom**, and the **awakening**. So that **this dhamma** can be **your spiritual medicine** for you to develop a clear **understanding of life** and to **recover** from **whatever life problem, affliction, suffering** and **misery**. The **best solution** is to **awaken** to the

teaching of **Dhamma**. So Dhamma, if you can see the beauty of it, the importance of it, then you will **resolve to cultivate and realize it or awaken** to it because it can be of **great benefit to living beings, especially human beings**. It can bring about **great transformation** to the individual in the **form** of having mental **clarity, understanding, wisdom, virtue and transformation** in our **character and personality** for the better. Then it will **help us understand life, improve** our life, and **make us beautiful**. Then we can become a **blessing to all of humanity, environment, and nature**. So, this is the **part on Dhamma** that I **wish all Kalyāṇamittas** can develop **clear understanding**.

When you **can appreciate** dhamma, you will **throughout the day cultivate** this **Buddha-Dhamma**; **develop** the **understanding, reflect, contemplate, silent** your mind **to perfect yourself, to awaken** as **dhamma is everywhere**. When you **can see dhamma, you see the Buddha**. That is why the Buddha told the monks **“He who sees Me, may not see the Dhamma** (because that is only the physical form of Lord Buddha). **“But He who sees the Dhamma,”** The Buddha said, **“Sees Me”** because the **Buddha is the embodiment of His perfection of wisdom and virtue**. What is Dhamma? **Dhamma is his teaching**. When you have it and when you can **realise it**; you can become the **Sammā Sambuddha**. You can have the **embodiment of wisdom, virtue, and all the perfections** that He has **perfected**. You can become **Sammā Sambuddha, the omniscient being who is fully enlightened (well known for his nine great virtues)**. That is why we chant the salutation to the Buddha: **“Iti pi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammā saṃbuddho... and so on”**.

So, all the teachings point towards the **beauty and importance** of Dhamma. Do, keep this in mind; **cherish** the Buddha-Dhamma,

develop the **faith** ('Saddhā'), '**Vīriya**', then **sincerely** with faith, **persevere**, **cultivate** to **develop** '**Sati**', **stabilise** it to become '**Samādhi**' so that all these **spiritual faculties** can become **very stable**. With '**Sati**' and '**Samādhi**' developed, **wisdom** ('Paññā') will **naturally arise**. So, these five spiritual faculties of 'Saddhā', 'Vīriya', 'Sati', 'Samādhi' and 'Paññā', you **must develop** them until they become **very powerful, unshakable** and **very stable**, until they become **bala**. I have helped you by putting it into the **vows** in the four-page Bodhisattva vows yellow card; if you go through it, you will find them, and it is also stated in our chanting book. It can help you **make** your **aspiration** until the **spiritual faculties** become **unshakable**, through invoking the power of merits etc. Okay, with this, maybe we can end our sharing and we will continue with the **second session** where we will open for **meditation reporting, Q&A, and dhamma sharing** on the topic "Dhamma in daily Life".

3.2.4 Mind must have no dwelling

Brother Teoh: Brother Song, yes... you can continue.

*Brother Song: Brother Teoh, I would like to share two experiences. A few nights ago, while I was **watching** the YouTube video, coincidentally the YouTube was playing the **Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng's video**. It is from a **serial drama** but was shortened like the short video clips we have, which are within 8 minutes. I was watching a scene from the video, regarding the conversation between the **nun** and **Hui Neng**; regarding **Mahā Nibbāna Sutra** (大涅槃经). As it was a serial drama it followed very closely to the life story of the **Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra** (六祖坛经). The conversation was **incredibly beautiful**. After I finished watching the 1st video, I continued*

with the next. The second video was about Hui Neng listening to the Diamond Sutra 《金刚经》. In this video, the person reciting the sutra was a monk not a merchant. The moment the monk recites a particular stanza, “The Mind must have No Dwelling” [应无所住，而生其心]. I felt a strong vibration within my heart; finally, I understood it.

Brother Teoh: Yes! You have the ability already. That is why you can have that **understanding** to **appreciate** the **profound dharma** which is so beautiful.

Brother Song: I was surprised as the stanza was recited, there was a deep insight feeling vibrating as though I have understood (this time not at the thought level) but with a deep sense of understanding from within.

Brother Teoh: It is **an understanding** because when you have **stabilised** that aspect (the ability to be **aware** and **silent**); then you can know why that phrase (or that stanza) - “**The mind must have no dwelling**” is **so beautiful**. That stanza is **unbelievably** beautiful because the **moment** the **mind dwells**, it **creates mundane thinking**, and **saṅkhāra arises**. That is what “dwelling is”. Like I always say, **our mind**; we **can do** only one **thing** at a time. **Either** we are **lost** in **thought** with the **saṅkhāra**; **preoccupy** with **our thinking**, our **emotion**, our reaction to **sense experience** or we are **completely silent** and **still**. When we are **completely silent** and **still** there is just the **awareness nature** that is **aware**. That is why it **does not** dwell. That is how we can have this **ability** to understand. It is only the **Specific Phenomena Awareness**, meaning the **true mind** is **aware** of **specific phenomena**. Or when it is **completely silent without** a **centre**, then it is just the “**Oneness Nature**”. It can have the ability to be aware of all things. If it wants to know, it can know; otherwise, it is just ‘still’, ‘silent’ and ‘aware’! So, all this is the **result** of **proper cultivation, understanding, and transformation**. That is why you can

have that **ability now** because you have gone through **quite a lot** of the needed **training**. All these are **incredibly beautiful**. In fact, if you can **relisten** to all these **attentively**, it can bring forth a lot of **understanding** and **wisdom**. Even the dialogue between **the nun** and **Hui Neng**, at that time I remember, it was so beautiful. Even though the nun, **initially** when she came to know who Hui Neng is, she was **disappointed** and **unimpressed** because when she showed him the sutra, Hui Neng said, he is **an illiterate**, and he **does not know** how to **read** the sutra. Then she said, *“If you don’t know how to read, then **how can you understand and how can you teach?**”* But Hui Neng said, *“if you read to me the sutra, I can help you understand”*.

Hui Neng later explained to her. **Dhamma is not words, is not concept, is not sutra**. It is **not based on language**. The **words are not the truth**. Just like the **word ‘tree’** in English and the actual tree (which is without word) is **not the same**. It **cannot be understood** by **pure learning** (Intellectual Learning) because all these **only point** towards the **truth** (dharma) which is **beyond words**. You need **understanding** (wisdom) to **awaken**. These are **truths**. These are **reality**, which is **beyond mind, beyond thought**. Then he gives some examples to explain its meaning. Words and language are **needed** for us to **communicate, describe, and express** the meaning of **something**. Just like the **finger** pointing at the thing (can be the **moon** or anything) that we want to describe, is **not that thing** (the **moon**, etc). Then Hui Neng finally said, *“Therefore, the **Buddha’s heart**, the **mind dharma**, the **wonderful** principle of **Sudden Enlightenment**, has **nothing** to do with the **words**. Instead, it points **directly** to the **true mind** so that we can **see** our **true nature** and become **Buddha**. Since it is **not based on language**, to **understand** the **sutra**, it does **not matter** whether you can **read** the **words** or not”*. It was incredibly beautiful and going through **that sharing** is very **meaningful**.

Then later when he listened to the **Diamond Sutra** expounded by the 5th Patriarch, ‘Wow’ that part was the **most beautiful**. That part is on

understanding “the **self-nature**”, all about that ‘**nature**’ and the **understanding** of the **purpose** of the **mundane mind**. This mind, he said, “you must **know** how to **use it** and yet **not be deluded or deceived** by it”. That phrase is **most profound**. That is why at that time **my nature** also became very **different**. There was **so much joy** to express the **profoundness** of the **teaching**. In fact, the author who wrote those things **may not** understand what that deep meaning is; that profound meaning is, but for a **cultivator** who has the **understanding**, it is so **beautiful**. That is **what Dhamma is**.

Ultimately is to **realise** that this **mundane mind** is **karmically conditioned** for us **to come** to this **existential world** to **experience life** and this is **most important**. So, do **make use** of it **to live** life, to **cultivate**, to **fulfil** our **vows** and **do whatever we want to do**. You need this **karmically conditioned form** and **mind** to **arise** within the **condition world** because **duality exists** within the condition world. **Dhamma exists** within the **condition world**. **Law of karma exists** within the **condition world**. The condition world **recognises** relationships even though the **ultimate** dhamma is **Anattā**. That is why within the existential world, there is birth and death, there is old age, sickness, and death. There are living beings, there are human beings. When there is life, there is existence, there is Dhamma. So, everything is, - **like exists** and **appears real**, which is **true basically**. That is what the teaching is all about.

But when you **awakened** and **realised** the ultimate **unconditioned reality** or **truth** then you will understand **why** Guānyīn under the **Heart Sutra** mentioned, “**In true emptiness**, all these that exist within the **conditioned world**, did not exist” - because that is the **unconditioned**. That is why in the **Heart Sutra**, when you **recite it**, you will understand, - there is **no contradiction**. So, all these understandings are possible.

Sādhu to you Brother Song. You will have to go through all this. You will start, to see the **beauty** of all this. That is why, in the early days I remembered I also like to view and follow some of these Sixth **Patriarch videos** even though I am **English educated**. I could not really understand the **more profound mandarin words** because some of the words are beyond what I can understand, then I must check with my wife. When I ask my wife, I only want to know the **meaning** of the **word**. I do not want to know the explanation; I will know the meaning once I **understand** the **meaning** of the **words**, then I will know whether it is the truth or not. Then, if it is the truth, the **profoundness** of that **truth** becomes **very clear** to me **because** my **nature** already **awakens** to it long ago. So, what I need is, to know the meaning of the **mandarin words** expressing the Dhamma. Means the actual understanding of those words because - the Dhamma (the truth) part, my nature has awakened to it from its past life cultivation. That is why this life when I **encounter truth**, my **nature straight** away understands. And it is the **way I give** (like in this life and in the past), is the **way** I will **receive** this **understanding** because of the **Law of Karma** - you **reap what you sow**. That is the reason why in this life, I **can receive truth extremely fast**, I can **awaken very fast**, and I can **understand things very fast**. So, all this will be **reflected** as you **walk** the **path of Dhamma** and go **through** the **cultivation**.

So, for you (Song), you are going through all these, and you will continue to experience more and more. It will become more and more meaningful, more and more profound. When that **stabilises**, you will **be able** to later **share** and **express** it out. When you **read sutta** or whatever that has the **truth**, you will **understand** it **very differently** from what people explain in the commentaries. Because I realised not all commentaries are accurate. Most of them are **not accurate**. They explain based on their understanding, at their level. So, all these **are part** and **parcel of cultivation**, the Buddha-Dhamma. Hopefully with this **understanding** and **explanation**, you can **develop**

a **clearer** and more stable **understanding to move on** because this is very beautiful.

3.2.5 Penetrative Understanding

Brother Teoh: Yes! You can continue Brother Song. After that what happened?

Brother Song: At that time when we attend Brother Teoh's class on the Diamond sutra or when we chant the Diamond Sutra and come across these eight wordings:

应无所住 (Yīng wú suǒ zhù)
而生其心 (ér shēng qí xīn)

Meaning: - 'To arise the **pure mind**, the mind must have **no dwelling/abiding**' – it is as if I understand but at that time, it is only at **knowledge level**. However, when I heard/read it recently, I immediately can **understand it fully** and it is **no longer** at the thought level. It is like a **realisation**, and I had understood its deep and profound meaning.

Brother Teoh: The more complete version of the above stanzas (from Chapter 10 of the Diamond sutra) is reproduced as below for clearer understanding: -

应如是生清净心 (yīng rú shì shēng qīng jìng xīn)

In **true suchness** he **should thus produce** a pure Mind/Heart which is **clear** and **tranquil**

不应住色生心 (bù yìng zhù sè shēng xīn)

He should **not produce** a mind that **dwell in form**

不应住声香味触法生心

(bù yìng zhù shēng xiāng wèi chù fǎ shēng xīn)

He should **not produce** a mind that **dwell in sound, smell, taste, tactile or dharms**

应无所住 (Yīng wú suǒ zhù)

He **should instead produce** a mind that **does not dwell anywhere**
(mind without dwelling)

而生其心 (ér shēng qí xīn)

Then only such **pure mind** can arise.

Brother Teoh: Ya, **Sādhu!** And it is like you **have penetrated** the **Dhamma** and it is **no longer** just knowledge to you anymore because you **have penetrated** and **awakened** to the dhamma and the **dhamma is so beautiful**. It **has nothing** to do with the thought. Previously when you read or hear all these dhamma, you look at the words and try to get the meaning from the words. That is why it is **not an awakening** yet. That is **not a penetrative** understanding. That is still at the **contemplation** and **reflection** level, and you are **trying** to use the **intellectual** understanding that you have at that time to **develop** the **understanding** of it. The **real awakening** is different - the **moment** you **listen**, you **awaken**. This type of dharma is so beautiful – which means your nature is ready to receive such truth. That is why sometimes people describe it as their ‘aha moment’.

A similar ‘aha moment’ also happened to the late 120-year-old monk, Master Xu Yun. When the **attendant** poured hot boiling water into

his cup, it **accidentally spilled** onto Master Xu Yun's hand. As a **natural reaction**, his hand moved, and the teacup dropped from his hand and **cracked** on hitting the **floor**. At that **moment**, he **awakened**. His **mind freezes** and was like **pulverised**. When he came out of it, he **understood everything**. All this is possible because at that moment when the boiling water burnt his physical hand, what happened was his **thought/thinking stopped**. The thought **froze, stopped** and since **he was ready**, only needing something (the crack sound) to trigger off awakening. Then the **nature awakened**. That is why sometimes it is **not necessary** to believe "**only dhamma**" can awaken.

I remember in the first instance, when **my nature awakened** to the **three universal characteristics**, I was standing at the side **listening** to one of my **guides teaching** a Singaporean about phenomena. Then she asked him to see, and she moved her hand twice. Straight away **without thought** (because I was mindful and silent and ready), I awakened to the three universal characteristics immediately. There was **no dhamma, nothing**. She said, "**just see**" and then **she moved** her hand. I remember **two movements**. Then she just asked, "what do you see?". That person cannot understand what she was trying to explain, but although I was standing at the side and because I was aware, mindful, my nature saw – 'this is what phenomena is all about'. This is what the Paṭicca Samuppāda is all about. This is what **dependent origination** is all about, everything is **condition arising, causal phenomena** (the **4-phase cycle** of birth, sustenance, decaying and cessation). That is why, this **coming and going** apply to all things, all the **phenomena** within the **conditioned world**, they all behave the same. All **nature's characteristics** are the same. That is why it is a **universal characteristic**, the **phenomenal world** of form, and consciousness, everything has become very clear. So, a lot of things in cultivation **may not be what you think**, even **Ajahn Chah** also went through something similar. His **thoughts** were **almost absent** after

he **became tired** from **walking meditation**. While resting he went into the stillness; there was silence, and the **mind went inward** after he heard some drums vibration from the **celebration** in the village nearby. And suddenly, he was completely **still** and **silent** because that "thing" triggered off the awakening. The **mind went into cessation**. When he came out, he just **understood the Dhamma**. So, the way people become enlightened or awakened can be in many varied forms.

Even during the times of the Buddha, there were **many examples** of monks, nuns and all their **unique ways of awakening**. There was one, I remember, she was washing her feet. As she poured the water, because she was **so mindful** and **aware**, before the water reached the end, she **became an Arahant**. How is this possible? Then there was one monk who **cannot even remember one stanza**. The Buddha gave him a **white cloth** and asked him to clean it. Then he realised, the more he wants to clean it the dirtier it becomes. Then, he **suddenly awakened** and **became an Arahant** because he realised that the **cloth** the **Buddha** gave him **originally** was **already pure**. "**Pure**" here means, it is like our **true nature** but when he uses his own **mundane mind**, like **trying to clean the cloth** via **mundane thinking**, the more he does it the **dirtier** it becomes. He realised the **defilements** come from the **memory**, come from the **brain**, the **accumulation of knowledge** and all **those conditionings** and **belief systems**, etc. Then **he realised the truth** and **awakened**. He does not need to do anything, **just silent to realise that self-nature**. Then the **mind returned** to its **original state**. That is why a lot of **very profound awakening happens, not through listening** to the dhamma, they **happen because** of their **unique way** of cultivation. Like Venerable **Sāriputta**, he became a **Sotāpanna** when he heard the two stanzas dhamma ('whatever that arises, there are **causes and conditions behind** and these causes and conditions my teacher had explained') recited by **Venerable Assaji**. Most of the monks awaken during that

time through hearing the sutta, especially the **Fire Sermon**. **Everything is burning, the eyes are burning, consciousness is burning**. So, when you have the **dhamma**, this one can awaken **amazingly fast** but there are some who must go through **different means**. So, you may have to go through and experience all these and come to **know what your nature is, what your unique character, way, feature, and past training are**. Then, you will see how it **unfolds** and you will also gain understanding on why all these people can also awaken. This is the beauty of the dharma. So, this part is for you, Song, Poh Cheng and all other Kalyāṇamittas. As they cultivate, they will know. Listen to this recording again, it will give you more **understanding and faith**. In fact, **today's sharing is incredibly good**. Even the explanation from our today's "**sutra of infinite meanings**" sharing on, - 'inherently everything is **originally still and empty**', is so **beautiful**. Although you may think that it is the same **essential dhamma** that I used to go through, but the **way I present** it this time (because of condition), is quite different. It just comes out like that – straight from the heart. I do not plan anything or prepare anything. It just happened. So, for you, it is good, Song. This is the **correct way to develop the understanding**. You can continue with your sharing.

3.2.6 Sixth Patriarch's Poem

*Brother Song: I continued to watch the video clip the next morning. There was a part which shows the four stanzas' poems between Shen Xiu and Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch. The clip was about a junior monk reciting the stanzas by Shen Xiu in the kitchen. The moment they recited, something inside me **started to vibrate**. Then comes the scene Hui Neng went to the wall near the end part of temple and he requested someone who was beside him to write his stanzas on the wall and when the first stanza '菩提本无树' (Pú tí běn wú shù) – 'Bodhi is fundamentally without any tree', was recited, there was this*

vibration from my nature again. As I see the stanzas being written, the vibration continues.

Brother Teoh: This is because the **understanding** has become **more stable** and **clearer** to you. That is why it **shows up**, it **expresses out** that you have **penetrated** this dhamma. And it is like, your nature can feel it. Then there is this **deep joy** and **deep understanding** within.

Brother Song: “When he wrote ‘where can any dust alight’, my tears just rolled down”.

Brother Teoh: That is the ultimate understanding. “**Originally** it was **empty where can the dust alight**”. So, if you understand that stanza of Hui Neng, you can see how Hui Neng **tears apart** Shen Xiu’s poem. Shen Xiu’s poem is not that bad, but he has **not** awakened, even though he has reached what we call, the **gate of enlightenment** but he **does not** know how to **cease** his mind to **realise** it. That is why the Fifth Patriarch knew. But to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding, He said, this stanza is not bad. You all can follow it and it can help you develop a lot of understanding and pāramī. So, the Fifth Patriarch told the monks to recite it and learn from it. But that is just the **initial way** of the **Theravāda tradition’s cultivation**.

Shen Xiu’s poem said, “The body is a bodhi tree”, 身是菩提树 (Shēn shì pú tí shù)

- which is true because the Buddha **realized his enlightenment** underneath the **bodhi tree**. So, our physical body as Shen Xiu realise, is like the **bodhi tree (tree of Enlightenment)** because from the physical body, he can **cultivate** the **four foundations of mindfulness** (kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā and dhammānupassanā). That is why he said our **body** is like the **bodhi**

tree and the Buddha also **mentioned** it **very clearly**. He said, ‘within this **fathom length body** of ours, along with **mindfulness, perception** and **thought**, he **proclaimed** the **world**, the **cause of the arising** of the world, the **cessation** of the world and the **path** that lead to the cessation of the world’. This means Shen Xiu knew what the Buddha was trying to explain that “within this fathom length body along with perception, mindfulness and thought, he can **proclaim** the **Four Noble Truths**.” He knew, with this body we can cultivate the Four Foundations of Mindfulness because the four foundations of kāya (our physical body), aggregate of vedanā (feeling), and citta (thoughts) and dhamma are all there and they are important. This is a good understanding.

Then he said, **our mind** is like a **mirror bright** on a **stand** (心如明鏡台 Xīn rú míng jìng tái). This part he got it **wrong**. That is the **mundane mind**, he has **never gone beyond** the **mundane mind**. That is **why he clings** on to that mind. Then he said, we **must constantly** and **continuously polish** this **mundane mind** until it **shines** so that **no dust can alight** “时时勤拂拭，勿使惹尘埃” (Shí shí qín fú shì, wù shǐ rě chén'āi). To him, this is cultivation. This is the **Theravāda’s way** of cultivation. He actually followed the advice of the Buddha, to avoid all evils, do good but he **did not** understand what **purification of mind** is because **he did not develop** the **daily mindfulness** leading to **heedfulness** to realize his **self-nature**. So, to him he **only needs to maintain** awareness or that kind of mindfulness. He did not develop the **stability of daily mindfulness**. He did not know **how to relax, maintain awareness, silence everything** because **he held on** to the **wrong mind**. He wants to be **constantly aware, ever mindful** but **not knowing** that this **constantly aware** or **mindfulness nature** is a **silent mind** that is **just naturally aware**. This **silent awareness** is capable of observation via the direct seeing to awaken, not to do things, not to look at duality, defilements, **always wanting to maintain** that **alertness, the awareness** so that **no dust can alight**. Like polish till it

shines, until no **defilement** can come near the **mundane mind**. This means you are still caught in **duality**, *one sided duality*.

The moment Hui Neng hears the stanzas of Shen Xiu, he knows **Shen Xiu** has not **realised** the **true mind**. He **does not** understand what that **true mind** is. That **true mind** is the **silent mind**, that **true nature** within which is just aware. So, he came out with another poem to tear Shen Xiu's poem apart. Because of his wisdom, he said, '菩提本无树' (Pú tí běn wú shù) - bodhi or enlightenment is not a tree. It has nothing to do with concept and ideals. It is an awakening. It is an understanding, a wisdom.

Hui Neng's counter poem is as below:

菩提本无树 (Pú tí běn wú shù) - **Bodhi** or **Enlightenment** is fundamentally without any tree

明镜亦非台' (míng jìng yì fēi tái) - the **true mind** is neither the stand nor a mirror bright

本来无一物 (běn lái wú yī wù) – **originally** there was **nothing**

何处惹尘埃 (hé chù rě chén'āi) – **where** can the **dust** alight?

Now you understand why Hui Neng's above **counter poem** is so beautiful.

He said, that is **not** the **true mind**, because the **true mind** has **nothing** to do with the **mirror bright** on the **stand**. The **true mind** is just that **awareness nature** within. Then he said, '**within** the true mind, **originally** there was **nothing**, - no duality, no word, etc. i.e., '本来无一物' (Běn lái wú yī wù) - originally there was nothing. So, if you **have realised** that **self-nature**, which is the **unconditioned**, you will understand. It is just that nature, it is not a being. It cannot come out and live life. It cannot talk, it does not have word, it does not have

concept, - nothing. That is why originally it was empty or ‘本来无一物’ (Běnlái wú yī wù). There was nothing inside, and you cannot talk about it, you cannot describe it. So, that is the **true mind**, ‘本来无一物’ (originally there was nothing), ‘何处惹尘埃’ (Then where can the dust alight?) The dust comes about through **your mundane mind** that **creates the duality**. When you create duality, dust arises. Wholesome and unwholesome arise; defilement and non-defilement arise. So, when you are caught in this situation, it is like the stanzas that the Buddha spoke, *“imasmim̐ sati idaṃ hoti, imasmim̐ asati idaṃ na hoti”* (When this arises that arises, when this ceases that ceases).

This **non-duality** concept, Shen Xiu **did not** understand. It talks about duality. It says, *when this arises, that arises*. That is what duality is. When you create an opposite, meaning like **defilement**, automatically whatever that is **not defilement** which is wholesomeness arises. So, you want wholesomeness. You do not want defilement, but both are **duality created** by the **mundane mind**. So, how can you cultivate in this way to cease it? You **cannot** because **when you create one, the opposite automatically manifests**. That is why *“imasmim̐ sati idaṃ hoti”* - which means *when this arises, that arises*. Then, the Buddha continues *“imasmim̐ asati idaṃ na hoti”* - which means *when this cease, that ceases*. That is, when you do not create, **both the duality never exists**. That is why Hui Neng knew **originally** it was **empty**. If you **do not create**, where can the **dust alight** and that bring about **profound understanding** and **awakening**. That is why, when the Fifth Patriarch read their poems, he knew Shen Xiu was not ready – reason why he straight away went to the kitchen and looked for Hui Neng to talk to him. Of course, the way they talk, their words are like camouflage. Though the words were camouflaged, Hui Neng knew the Fifth Patriarch’s message to invite him to come over at the 3rd watch of the night, to hand him the patriarch ship, the final teaching, and the mind seal. In the middle of the night, at the third watch ‘三更’ (Sān gēng), he went and meet up

with the Fifth Patriarch, Master Hung Ren and received the patriarch ship, the **bowl**, the **robe** and the **insignia** and the **teachings**. So, that is how the Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra became so famous, meaningful, and beautiful, and my **nature** can **understand** this **straight away** the moment I **heard that poem**, though no one taught, described, or explained it to me before. No teacher taught me that or any book write about it in that manner, but my **nature awakened**, and I knew what it was. That is why it is so beautiful. So, **when** you understand this: ***originally there was nothing, where can the dust alight***, then **do not be foolish** and allow the **mundane mind** to **create duality**. Do not hold onto things, do not give meaning to things. Because all these **pertain** to the **mundane world, mundane existence**. Within our **mundane existential** world, **duality exists, life exists, living beings** exist. All these exist **but** when you **awaken** and realise **profound emptiness**, all these **do not** exist (within the **unconditioned**). That is why the Heart sutra said, *'in true emptiness, there is no such thing'*. So, this is the profound meaning. Hope you all can understand.

You should **reflect, contemplate**, and **go deep** into it and **develop** your own understanding. Initially, it is like what you have gone through, - wow, it is so beautiful, but you **should reflect** and **contemplate until** you can **come up** with your own **understanding** as to why it is so beautiful and how when later, he continues to have the dialogue with the Fifth Patriarch and their exchange of words are even more beautiful. So, the **profound** understanding of that **true nature** is incredibly beautiful. It clearly explains what the **mundane mind is** and what the **true mind** and **true nature is** and why that type of conversation between two enlightened beings, only the enlightened ones can understand and awaken to. So, hopefully with this **detailed explanation**, more and more people can develop the **understanding** and the **contemplation to go deeper** into all these so that they can **share** this **beautiful teaching** with others later.

3.2.7 Direct Pointing to The True Mind

*Brother Song: I continued to watch the videos these few days and realised that the conversation of Sixth Patriarch is **incredibly good and profound**, simple, and direct pointing to the true mind, ‘直指人心’ (Zhí zhǐ rén xīn).*

Brother Teoh: He bypassed all the Theravāda type of initial teaching and cultivation involving methods, techniques and mundane dhamma by **pointing directly** to his first hallmark of ‘无念’ (Wú niàn) cultivation. You must **realise** your **true mind** which is **without** thought. **Without** thought that is your **true mind**. Then **meditate** with your **true mind**, and **nobody can teach** like that. That is why thus far, only he teaches like that. He takes you **direct** to the **true mind**, the **self-nature**. That is why his way is **so direct** and **very penetrative** and he bypassed all the so-called **initial teachings** because the initial teaching of the **Theravāda tradition**, the essential dhamma and all those things are so beautiful, so meaningful but they are all **mostly thought** and **knowledge-based Dharma**. That one *needs reflection, contemplation, and inquiry* to **stabilise the understanding**. Finally, to awaken, you need the third turning cultivation. You must silent everything to insight into phenomena, to awaken because **without mindfulness**, without **realising** the **true mind** you **cannot meditate**, you **cannot awaken**, you **cannot understand**. That is why his **three cultivation hallmarks**, **No thought, No mark, No dwelling** (无念, 无相, 无住), of Hui Neng are incredibly beautiful. After you have penetrated the “**no thought**” stage to realise your **true mind**, then only you can develop the **daily mindfulness**, the **silent mind** to develop **higher wisdom** to realise the “**no mark**” stage, - that is *no mark of a Self-cultivating, no mark of others and no mark of life, existence and dharma* which are very profound. It is **not** easy. You must **realise true emptiness** to **realise** the **no mark**, the 12-Links and all those related understanding of

course. The **silent mind** that **observes** and comes to **understand** - like I explained earlier before we start the class - at the beginning of today's sharing. You must understand the whole thing very clearly and then the teaching becomes so different.

After you can clear the **"no mark" stage**, you are really very different. Your cultivation is already very advanced. Then, to reach the **stage** of **"no dwelling"** is **not easy**. You need to go the **Bodhisattva way** and, for the **mundane mind to collapse** is also not easy. You need to **have** pāramī and all those understanding. But do not worry, all these can happen except, it depends on the individual's cultivation, their **understanding**, their **perseverance**, their **sincerity**, **trust**, and **faith**. Faith is very important. So, all these are very beautiful. More and more **Kalyāṇamittas** are **moving** into this **direction** of cultivation. That is **why my sharing** also, **I realised**, I am going into all these in a **different** and **deeper manner**. Then, all the **explanations** that I **develop** and **explain now**, are **quite easy** to **understand** because there is a **lot of clarity**. Basically, **most of you** have already **developed** the **initial basic understanding**, **stability** of **mindfulness** and **cultivation** to have the conditions to receive all **these types of teachings**. All these will **prepare you** all for the **next retreat**. The next retreat is going to be very beautiful, and **a lot of things are going to happen**. Very good and sādhu to you Brother Song.

3.2.8 Thought-Based knowledge is not wisdom

Brother Song: I recently came to realize, even after having attended Brother Teoh's explanation of the Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra classes in the early years; the understanding was still mainly at the intellectual and contemplative level. However, this time around when I watched master Hui Neng's (Sixth Patriarch) short video clip's

conversations again, especially Hui Neng's explanation, the understanding is so different. It is now so much clearer, and very direct and like, I could fully understand its deep meaning. The disciples of Shen Xiu who came to share and ask Hui Neng questions had not realised their true mind; they were caught in thought-based meditation because their mundane minds are highly active doing and creating dualities, thereby giving rise to a lot of thought-based questions. They use thoughts which are limited and egoic to reason and analyse a situation/problem based on their limited views, opinions, and conditionings.

Brother Teoh: When Shen Xiu taught the Noble 8-Fold Path, it was all thought-based. That is why when the Sixth Patriarch during the exchanges with one of his disciples, asked, "How did your teacher Shen Xiu teach you?" My teacher says, 'morality is abstaining from doing evil, samādhi is concentration of mind and wisdom is to purify one's own mind'. After that the Sixth Patriarch answered, "No. The real Noble 8-Fold Path is not like that, it has nothing to do with all those things." The disciple was shocked when told what they had learned is Dhamma knowledge developed through thought-based cultivation, not the profound teaching from the 'self-nature'. The profound true teaching of the Noble Eightfold Path is rather different. The right view is based on the penetrative understanding and awakening, developed from the three hallmarks of Hui Neng. You must at least clear the first hallmark of "no thought", otherwise, you cannot have the direct seeing (leading to the right view). Then when you have the right view, it is not about how to continue to arise right thought, right speech and right actions only, all these are still the initial cultivations. Without a stable sati, wisdom, and stability of

understanding, the **Noble Eightfold Path** cannot become a **part of you**. You **cannot** have the **embodiment** of all the **Noble Eightfold Path factors**. You need the **initial wisdom**, the **yoniso manasikāra** borne of the **direct seeing** and wisdom borne of **direct insight** into **phenomena**. When that one arises, then **naturally**, the **four right efforts** can fall into place. When the **3rd turning wisdom**, leading to the **awakening** arises, the **wisdom will prompt you** at every moment of sense experience. Then you will know what the **Buddha** meant by **yoniso manasikāra** after that. That **initial wisdom** must be there, whereas what **Shen Xiu** taught them is to **use memory**, and **Dhamma knowledge** (via **thoughts reasoning** and **analysis**) to **try to overcome** their **defilement** and **solve** their **problems**. All the explanations given are thought-based. That is why Hui Neng says, ‘if you cultivate like that you are **wasting** your time’. You **cannot awaken**. You have to **silent** your mind **to observe**, to **understand** and to **awaken**. Then only all this becomes possible. Then you must **reflect**, **contemplate** until your **understanding** is very **stable**. Then **from inside** at the **heart area**, it will **come out** to **prompt** you. The **whole understanding** of the **awakening** is **so different**. So, if you **cannot understand** how the **real awakening** arises, **how can you teach people?** You cannot! There is no way! You will be stuck in **knowledge** and **thought-based practices**; coming out with **teachings** that are **logical** and **interesting**, but **not** from the **direct seeing**, and **awakening**. So, **understanding the cultivation** is especially important. When you meditate **without understanding**, it will **not lead to awakening**. It will make **one gullible** and lead one to **thought-based** and **knowledge-based Dhamma**.

So, **realising the true mind**, the **silent mind** is **paramount**, and a **pre-requisite to meditate**. That is why you **must have sati**, then **stabilise**

the **sati** to become **ever mindful**. Realise the **true mind**, the **silent mind**, then from there, **develop heedfulness**. This is the reason why **Hui Neng** explained: *'the dhamma I teach (or speak of) **does not depart from the self-nature, for to depart from the self-nature in explaining the dhamma is to speak of marks and continuously confuse the cultivators. You should come to realize that all dhamma arise from the self-nature and this is true Sila, Samādhi and Paññā. Listen to my verse:***

*Mind-ground **without wrong/evil** – implies **self-nature morality**.*

*Mind-ground **compose, still and without confusion** – implies **self-nature Samādhi**.*

*Mind-ground **without delusion** – implies **self-nature wisdom**.*

I do not blame the **Theravāda tradition** and the other **Buddhist traditions** for all this **lack of understanding** because the **emphasis is traditionally on memorising the Sutta, chanting and doing all those thought-based sitting, walking, noting, focusing and concentration via various methods and techniques then repeating all that, thinking those are Meditation. All these are very mechanical (repetitive) practices involving thoughts and it will make the mind dull and rigid.**

At that time, there was no writing, and it has been like that for so long and they depended heavily on commentaries. Then over the years, the teaching has **become distorted**. The **true teaching** is no longer taught by enlightened beings. That is why you need the **real cultivators** who have the **awakening** to really bring back the **authentic, penetrative teaching** to teach and share the true dhamma. That is the reason **why initially** when I wanted to come out to share,

I find it difficult to teach you all because you all are so **conditioned** by all the various Theravāda methods, techniques, and way of teachings; the sutta text, and commentary-based teachings. **Whereas** the **true understanding** is from the **silent mind**, the **true mind**, the **awareness nature**, and I do not know **why** the meaning of **sati** was also **not** explained to people in a **clear manner**. That one, I think maybe over the years, it must have been lost, when they translate to another language, it becomes more difficult. At least what Bodhidharma brought over to China, that one is still **incredibly good** and **authentic**. In the Mahāyāna tradition, they know what that **sati** “正念” (zhèng niàn) is. I believe a lot of the Zen traditions they **do know** what the **daily mindfulness** is, what the **awareness nature** is, what that **true nature** is, but the **real teachers**, who **have such understanding, transformation** and **realization** may not be that many nowadays, - maybe only the **Patriarchs** and their **close disciples**. That is why this type of teaching is **not easy** to **come by**. So, what we have **developed** over the years are **incredibly beautiful**. Especially now with our **website**, the **short videos**, the **transcribed books**, and the various other valuable sharing. All these are going to **help future generations** and **a lot of Kalyāṇamittas**. If you can **sincerely spend time** listening to all these, you **can awaken**. Try to **write it down**; (what I say, write it down and read through it again). Sometimes you may think you know because when you listen, the words are there for you to follow, that is as if it is incredibly beautiful. But when you **close** the book or **do not refer** to anything, just listen, you realise you **cannot remember** because your wisdom inside, is still **not stable**, yet. There is understanding, but it is **not stable** yet. So, you need **to write it down** somewhere, then the **meaning** can stand out and become incredibly beautiful. All this **understanding** that **my nature**, and other

true cultivators went through **can arise** is because we **have cultivated** them for **exceptionally long time/periods**. Then **when we share** it just comes out **straight** from the **heart naturally**. Then when you listen, it is like **quite simple, quite easy** because **everything** has been **summarised** and **clearly laid out**. But when you write it down, the understanding is **clearer**; that is why the **transcript** is useful and good. You **read** the **transcript** then you **realise** all these are so **beautiful** and that is why **today's sharing**, if you **can do** the **transcript**, it is **going** to be **incredibly beautiful**, especially **my earlier explanation**. I realised these adapted verses sharing from this book (**Essence of Infinite Meanings**), **so far** there is **no transcript** yet. So, if **you** all have the **time** or **have** the **interest**, you should **start with this**, because today's sharing is incredibly good. Okay Brother Song you can continue. I do not want to take up much of your time.

3.2.9 Clarity of Two Minds (the true mind and the mundane mind)

*Brother Song shared that the **understanding** of this **path** must be **clear**. If it were the old me, in the past I would immediately ask about my experience. "Why like that?" I would ask Brother Teoh and Brother Teoh would say, it is still the "thought" that wants to know. During that time, there were lots of efforts to cultivate. And I only realised that recently I could **truly differentiate** between the **two minds**. Thought wants to know why, and many "why?" in the past. The questions of "why" were amazingly fast and these habitual tendencies would take over to stir the mundane mind.*

Brother Teoh: That is the basic mistake of cultivators. Because they do not know how to **differentiate** between these **two minds**. They always go back to the **mundane mind** which has the **memories, views, opinions, conditionings**, the **habitual thinking**, and scars of memories etc. And **acting according** to all these are **thought-based** actions (borne of accumulated memories) because they are **not wisdom** borne of the **direct seeing** by the **silent/true** mind. That is why I always tell you, that is *from the thought*. It is from the thought again! It **has come back** through the **back door**. The **thought is still active behind** (in the background). (Who wants to know? The **thought wants to know**). Unless you can understand what J Krishnamurti says about the **limitation of thought**, you **will continue to use thought**. Unless you can understand the **danger** of how **thought divides** and **creates duality**, through **concept** and **words**, you will **never stop** using **thought**. To you, thought is **so beautiful, so useful**, and **wonderful**. But thought has its **purpose** and its **place** because to come to this **existential world** to **live life** you need **thought**. Thought is **an instrument** for **communication**, for **expression**, for **learning** the technical thing, the **arts**, the **science** etc. But when it comes to **psychological memories** and **emotions**, you **cannot use thought**. Because it is a **waste of energy**. Energy **gets dissipated** amazingly fast through **thought**. It will create stress, emotions, and negativity of mind states. So thought has its purpose and thought is responds to memory. It has its purpose but **not** to apply it to **psychological** problems. Psychological problems need **Dhamma, Dhamma medicine**. But **to study technical, science subjects, mathematical subjects, IT** (Information Technology) and **everything else**, you need to have thought. Without thought, the logical mind cannot function, and the **logical mind** needs **to think**.

You must **think** with **clarity**. That is why the **Four Bases of Success** will **ensure mundane successes** if you know how to develop them. The first base is **passion** or “chanda” - for you to be **successful** in whatever you **want to excel in**, you must have the **passion to do it**, to **understand** it. Then you go all out to do it and that is “vīriya” (*strong tenacity/zeal to do*). Then “citta”, the **will power** to **drive** you to **success**. That one you **need thought**, you **use thought**. Then **finally** the **investigation part**, “vīmaṃsā”, to continuously **review** and **improve**. So, understanding all this is not easy.

That is why when I started to **come out** to share and teach, I realized the **traditional dhamma** commonly taught is extremely limited, and very dogmatic. They **cannot expand** into all this to develop the understanding, so that is the reason why **I knew** they will **fail** because **I understood**: “**acting according to memory**, or according to **Sutta knowledge is not acting at all**”. You need to **develop insight, wisdom** and **awakening** to **act**. Then only you **can penetrate all this**. And to penetrate all this, is **not easy** because you need the **silent mind** and this **silent mind’s understanding**, **I have been trying to teach** for so long. Only recently (in the last few years), it started to take shape and bear fruit. Then like what you mentioned, last time you **still cannot understand** all this, because a lot of your questions came from the thought. And basically, those **thought processes** arise from the **mundane mind** which is **still deluded** hence **limited** and **egoic**. If you **cannot differentiate** between the **two minds**, and develop the **clear understanding**, then you **cannot free**. So, for you Song, this understanding is incredibly good. But do reflect, contemplate, and realise the **big difference** between the **mundane mind** and the **true mind**. You must have a **clear** understanding of these **two minds**.

Otherwise, you will continue to **fall back** to the **mundane mind**. Like you say **habitual tendencies, deep rooted habitual tendencies** which recently, you came to realize. It is not easy **to root out** all these habitual tendencies. You **must combine** what I had shared with you and J Krishnamurti's teaching. It is very good of J Krishnamurti to point out that **thought is limited** but **he didn't** go into the **details to explain it**. I have explained to you what "thought" is.

Basically, when we are with the **true mind**, it is just **spacious awareness** because there is **no content** of consciousness yet. That is why **thought cannot arise**. There is **just awareness**. But when **you use your memory to perceive**, then **perception brings** in the **external form**, then **your views, opinions, and conditionings enable** your content of consciousness to go in. Then **it creates a thought**. Obviously that thought is **limited** because whenever you **perceive** something, you **shrink** that **pure awareness/consciousness** into that **limited (or narrow) field/space** like the **Buddha image**, you **zoom** into that. Then the **content of consciousness** (which is mainly your views, opinions, conditionings, and comments, etc,) goes in. Then it **becomes a thought**. So that is why **thought is limited**. And that thought is **egoic** because it comes **from delusion**. So, that is the **reason why, not until** you are enlightened, you **do not know** how to use **thought**. That is why the **user of thought** is particularly **important**. When the **user of thought** has **Dhamma**, has **wisdom** then thought becomes **right thought, wholesome thought, beautiful thought**, then you can **use thought**. Then **thoughts** become **your friend, a tool** to serve you, **no more problem**. Otherwise, it will condition **attachment, craving, clinging, grasping** and **self-delusion (sakkāyadiṭṭhi)**. Then you will always revert to **thought** because that

is the **only instrument** that deluded **human beings understand**. So, **see** all these **clearly, understand** all these **clearly**, then, you **will never revert** to using **thought to deal** with **psychological problems**. Then, you will **know** why **thought** has its **place in life, in society** but not in the **psychological world**, not for **Dhamma awakening and understanding**, not for **cultivation**. When it **comes to Cultivation** you must **realize** the **truth**, which is **beyond thought, beyond mind**. So, you must **understand** all these very **clearly**, then **only you** can have the **true penetrative, clarity and understanding** to **cultivate accordingly**. With all these **explanations**, I hope you all can understand. It is not easy to **understand this teaching because it is not what you think**. So, this is incredibly beautiful.

Brother Song, thank you so much for **bringing out all these conditions** for **my nature** to **explain all these**. This part is difficult **to understand** and **very profound** but **slowly**, there is **condition already** because **otherwise** the **sharing** will not have **all these** clear and profound understanding that **I just shared**.

To recap this is for you to understand clearly why the **mundane mind** is **egoic** and has its **limitation**. Why is it limited and why is it egoic? Why you **cannot use it** to **cultivate Dhamma** and **apply it to solve your life problem**, especially **psychological problem**. When you act according to memory, you are **not acting according to understanding** or **wisdom** (mainly because you do not have **yoniso manasikāra** yet), then your **whole cultivation** goes **haywire**. That is why people tend to always **use their intellect, Dhamma knowledge** to try to **practise dhamma**; - you **cannot**. So, **all these understanding** will become **truly clear** when you **cultivate correctly** from the **self-nature**. **Okay Song. Sādhu! To you.**

Brother Song: Yes, Sādhu! Brother Teoh.

3.2.10 All these are part of the cultivation

*Brother Song: Today's sharing is incredibly good. Therefore, all Kalyāṇamittas must put in **efforts**, have **faith** and **understanding** to **cultivate diligently** and accordingly. While meditating, we train the **mundane mind** to be silent. Whatever experience you went through, is **always part** of the **cultivation**. Just let it be. If we **do not understand** the training, we will **deviate** and **fall back** into **seeking good meditative** experiences. We want **to know** what the meaning and significance of all these experiences are. In fact, we only need to understand, all the **experiences** that **arise** during the **meditative training** are **part** of the **way** then our understanding is there. Then you can just **let things be**. Just be **silent**, and **whatever mind states** that **arise** just **“aware”**. **Do not need to react**. Slowly, we can start cultivating with this understanding for about 15mins or 20mins, via **training the mind** to be just **aware** then the **understanding** and **faith** can arise.*

Brother Teoh: Yes! Develop the mind and let it be more and more quiet, still, and aware so that it (the mind) does not think. That is especially important. That is **mindfulness** leading to **heedfulness**. When you are **heedful most** of the **time**, you are **just aware**. You **only need** to **arise** the thought when you need to **use** the thought for **living life** or **understanding** or **sharing** or **whatever**. Apart from that you are **most** of the **time silent** and **just aware**. You must reach this **stability** of training. And when you are developing the **cultivation** that you mentioned, whatever that happened, all your meditative

experiences (**jingjiè 境界**) - no matter how fantastic or special that arise (even including those from watching YouTube short video); those experiences are not important because they are all part of the way. Yes, what **is important is; does it give rise to wisdom?** If it **gives rise to wisdom, contemplative, reflection, inquiry or direct seeing** that is **useful**. It is the **wisdom that frees your mind, straightens our views, and let you understand**. When more and more understanding is there, wisdom arises naturally.

That is why you need **to silent** your mind to **observe**, to be **completely silent** to develop the ability to be **aware of what is going on** within your form and mind and in life. **Then** only can you **have self-knowledge**, to know who you are, what you are. Then you can **understand** how your **mundane mind arises**, how it **stirs**, how it **creates** all those dualities borne of **saṅkhāra's heedless** thinking. Then also **what thought is**, see the **limitation** of thought, how thought **divides** and **creates** all this **conflict**, and **misunderstanding**, and the **evil roots**; this **can only** be **understood** through a very **stable mindfulness**, and **awareness** (through the **internal awareness** that **sees** all these **movements**). If you **cannot do that**, you **cannot meditate**, then it becomes **thought-based doing**. **Thought** is continually active because **thought is trying** to meditate, or thought is trying to know or trying to do the noting, focusing, and chanting. All these are **thought-based**. It cannot give rise to **true understanding** or **wisdom**. It is not the **'self-nature' observing**. So, if thought is trying to understand thought then how can you be free from thought? Basically, thought is trying to control thought. The controller is the controlled. That is how J. Krishnamurti puts it. The **controller** which is thought is **trying to control** anger, emotion, etc., but anger and

emotion is also thought. You **do not separate** them because when you are **aware**, you **clearly see** the **delusion** of thought because **thought** cannot go **beyond thought**. **Thought** is **limited, egoic** and has all these problems. **Thought** has its **place** in **existence** and **life** but thought is **not** for us **to use** to **cultivate** the **Dhamma** because thought **cannot** penetrate beyond thought to **realise** the **Dhamma** which is **beyond thought, beyond mind**. So **thought-based** meditation, **thought-based** knowledge **does not serve** much purpose because it **cannot lead** to **awakening**. Thought-based knowledge is **not Dhamma**, not the **true Dhamma**! It is **not** the **real cultivation**! So, **see** all these. **Understand** all these. Then you become **different**.

So, today's main sharing point is to lead you all **deeper** into the **true cultivation** because **unless** you understand what that **true cultivation** is; you all **can still be trapped** at the **mundane mind, thought level** because the **mundane mind** is the **only instrument** that people can understand and use a lot. That is why you need **to reverse** all these, through training the **mind to be silent**, to be **aware**. Then you **can see** **how it** (the mundane mind) **stirs, to arise the defilements**, how it becomes **emotional, fearful, insecure, frightful**. How the **views, opinions** and the **conditionings come in** and **create conflict**, and **misunderstanding**. Then you start to understand why the Buddha says, the mind is the forerunner of all things, mind is chief. If you **give attention** to the **wrong thing** (things which are **unfit** for attention) then the **defilement**, the **āsava** becomes **more and more**. The un-arisen (defilement) arises and the arisen (defilement) will **proliferate** and **become** more **powerful**. But when you pay attention following the **Sabbāsava Sutta**, by **attending** to the **Four Noble Truths** and its **three turnings**, the Dhamma understanding arises, then you will

come to realise the arisen āsava ceases to be. The un-arisen defilement cannot arise because you are **basically contemplating, reflecting, and silencing** your mind to **develop** the **wisdom, the Dhamma understanding**. That is why you must pay attention to Dhamma. When you **reflect** on the **three turnings** of the **Four Noble Truths**, when you **cultivate** the **Noble Eightfold Path**, the essential Dhamma; - all these are **right attention**, which means you apply the **thought to the right things that are fit for attention**. You are not paying attention to **negative things, emotional things, frightful things, leading to fear, worry, anxiety and insecurities**. That is why when the faith is no more there, you will develop the **opposite negativity of mind states** of fear, worry, anxiety, doubt, sorrow, and lamentation. These are all the **mental hindrances** that arise because the **opposite 5 spiritual faculties** are not there. So, all this **understanding** you must have. Then **understand it clearly**, write it down (if you need to) so that it is no more just dhamma knowledge. Initially you need to learn the teaching, then try to put it into practice. When you put into practice, **initially** the **thought-based thinking** keeps on coming in to **interfere** because the **thought** which is **so conditioned, and habitual** is so active. Then **you need to continue to relax, maintain awareness and remain silent**. That is why that part is **particularly important**. If you do not do that you **cannot realise the true mind**. You **cannot develop** the **stability of awareness**. Then you **cannot do anything** to stop your **thinking mind**, the **mundane mind** from **being heedless**. Then according to Lord Buddha, the **heedless think** a lot **whereas the heedful never think** (or very seldom think), **most of the time they are just aware**. Since **heedfulness** is the path to the **deathless**. So, you **must train your mind to be heedful**. To be heedful you **must be aware. Stabilise it, then make it ever mindful**.

Then **use it to cultivate**; so that all the **essential Dhamma** can fall into place. That is the reason why your **cultivation** should be **done with understanding**. Follow all these steps: **relax** and **maintain awareness**, **stabilise** that to become **ever mindful** and then **use it to cultivate the three turnings** of the **Four Noble Truths**, and the **essential Dhamma**. Then **constantly listening** to the **Dhamma**, **reflect**, **contemplate**, develop the **faith**, “**saddhā**”, then arise the **initial wisdom**, **yoniso manasikāra**; develop **awareness** with clear **comprehension** (**satisampajañña**) following the 10 steps of **Avijjā Sutta**. All these will fall into place, they are all connected, linked. So, this understanding is particularly important. What Song wanted to explain today is very beautiful but because now for Song’s case, he **has not developed** the **stability** and **clarity of understanding** yet, that’s why he still cannot put into words clearly yet, but he basically knows what all these are. So, as a recap, if you **experience anything** or **whatever arise** during **cultivation**, always remember it is all **part of the way**. If you **are sincere**, you have **faith** and you **persevere**, the **Dhamma will unfold**. So, do not go and **create doubt**, **worry**, via asking “am I doing it correctly or not”? All these are **mental hindrances** arising from the thought. Have faith, be sincere and persevere. Just do! Then **continue to silent your mind**, **observe**, **dwell** in the Dhamma, **attend** to the **Dhamma**, the **three turnings of the Four Noble Truths**, the **essential Dhamma**, the **dhamma will unfold**. Including all these: - the **daily religious routine** (covering everything that I have taught you), the **daily mindfulness**, etc. **you will definitely progress**. You will become incredibly beautiful. Okay Song, Sādhu!

Brother Song: Sādhu Brother Teoh!

Brother Teoh: Sādhu! It is already 10:43 pm. Thank you so much, Song for bringing out the condition for **today's good sharing**. So, do listen to today's sharing. It can help a lot of people; the cultivation is all there. The understanding is all there. Slowly, slowly write it down and develop the **clear understanding**.

Okay so we shall **end** our today's sharing. Let us rejoice one more time. Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

