

Short notes for Bro. Teoh's Thursday class talk dated 18th Jan. 2018:

Audio mp3 : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180118.mp3>

Whiteboard Note : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180118.jpeg>

1. Bro Teoh started the class by going through the 4th January 2018 Thursday class **short notes**. All the **short notes** for our Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday classes would be made available to all Kalyanamittas and all those attending our March 2018 coming 9 days **meditation retreat** at **Cameron Highlands**. These short notes will also be uploaded to our broteoh.com website so that it **can help fellow Kalyanamittas** to develop a **clearer understanding** of the topics and dharma discussed during the classes.
2. Bro Teoh **reminded** Kalyanamittas to **determine strongly** and **cultivate diligently** during this **Buddha's Sasana** so that they **will not let this very important 'window of opportunity'** to slip by.
3. These **short notes** in *written form* will be **reviewed** and **elaborated** by Bro. Teoh in **future** classes to **give a clear understanding** of the **topics** and **dharma discussed** thereby helping Kalyanamittas **to progress** along the **path of dharma** much more easily.
4. Bro. Teoh went through the short notes on 4th January 2018 and **elaborated further** on the following –
 - (a) The 2 aspects of the 5 aggregates of form and mind. 1st aspect: as a **human being** (the physical body is the first aggregate then the **consciousness** that is trapped inside has 4 more aggregates and they are **feeling, perception, mental activities and mental states** etc. (*contents of consciousness*), and **consciousness**. 2nd aspect: the 5 mental aggregates where the mental form enters the consciousness or mind via the aggregate of perception.
 - (b) If we **deludedly grasp** and **cling** onto these **5 aggregates thinking** that they **are real, we will suffer**. Hence, **without wisdom**, we will definitely suffer.
 - (c) The **8 realities of life and existence** will cause us **affliction** if we don't have the wisdom. Hence, it is of **utmost importance** for us to understand **nature's laws that govern all of life** (especially the **Law of Karma**) and **train** the mind not to be **deceived** by the **phenomenal world**.
5. **Sister Angie asked:** What about certain **religions** that need their devotees to **confess their sins** first.
6. **Bro Teoh replied:** Asking for forgiveness is a good practice. By doing so, they could open up their Heart and this would help them relieve their suffering only temporarily and it's usually **not** a permanent fix.
7. For us Buddhists, the **understanding is deeper**. We can do the **following to help us recover:**
 - (a) First, ask for **forgiveness sincerely** to break the **karmic obstructions**. According to the Law of Karma, such **karmic obstructions** were due to **wrongful doings** in *previous existences*.
 - (b) Vow **not to repeat** all **such acts** that **lead to karmic negativities** via following the **advice** of the **Buddha to avoid all evil, cultivate goodness** and *purify our mind* to **take care** of **karma**.
 - (c) Determine to cultivate **virtues** and **wisdom** via cultivating the **ten meritorious** actions, **Noble 8-fold Path** and **observing the 5 precepts**.
 - (d) Invoke the **power of merits** (spiritual wealth) after we have cultivated sincerely so as to give rise to **causes** and **conditions** to help us **resolve all our problems amicably** or to help others.

8. This understanding can also be used **to help others** of **different faiths** to **recover from their problems** as long as they have an **open mind** because its principles are based on the understanding of nature's laws.
9. Bro Teoh **stressed again** the **importance** of **cultivating** the dharma **understanding**. The Buddha's teaching is **very simple** and it can bring about the liberation of mind leading to freedom from suffering.
10. **Thought** is **response to memory** and **thought** is the **second aspect** of the **5 aggregates of form and mind**. **Thought is consciousness and its content**. We need **mindfulness** to see **how thought** via our **delusion causes** us **to cling, grasp** and **hold** onto the **phenomenal world** thinking that is **real**. That's how human beings enter into **depression** because they grasp onto the cocoon of thoughts which make them suffer from a type of mental disorder called OCD (Obsessive and Compulsive Disorder).
11. To break this cycle of **repetitive OCD thought processes**, we need to have **right view** leading to **right thought**. Right thoughts are thoughts that are **fit for attention** and they give rise to **peace, harmony** and **understanding**. However, **wrong thoughts** that condition our fear, worries and anxieties, etc. have **the evil roots** and are thus **unfit for attention**. This has been explained in the Sabbasava Sutra.
12. **Without** mindfulness, one **cannot understand** the **twelve links** or **Law of Dependent Origination** which happen so fast. Then **self-delusion** will *continue* to **deceive** one to **cling** onto the **5 aggregates** via **mental defilements** that have the **evil roots** to condition one's **habitual** tendencies and **heedless** thinking.
13. **With mindfulness**, we are **very sensitive** because we **can feel** and **sense** even the **slightest subtle reaction of mind**. Hence, mindfulness can prevent us from becoming afflicted.
14. We should **contemplate** and **realize** that *this Form and Mind* (or the so called human being) is **not** a **permanent unchanging entity** that **we can cling onto** as the 'I' and the 'Mine'. Instead, it is karmically conditioned out for us to come to this existential world to live and experience life.
15. Thought is **like a knife** which can be used for **good purpose** or **to hurt** and **harm** ourselves and others. Hence one needs to use it appropriately.
16. Bro. Teoh related an experience during dinner with his fellow engineers. He heard about a first-class honours Engineer classmate who had gone into depression. When his friends asked Bro. Teoh to help out, he mentioned that there must be conditions for him to do so. Moreover, the person concerned must be willing **to listen** with an **open mind** because the solution also involves **spiritual understanding**.
17. Kalyanamittas can access our broteoh.com website to reinforce understanding of what has been shared. Bro. Teoh thanked all who had contributed in one way or other towards the setting up of this website.
18. Kalyanamittas should train themselves to **understand** clearly what has been shared until they are able to write out their understanding without having to refer to the notes.
19. Without the **dharma understanding**, it is very difficult **to decondition** the **heedless thinking** mind.
20. Via the **silent mind**, the **form** and **mind** which is **connected** to it (or the **nature within**) can awaken and understand.

(Note: Above draft short notes was prepared by Puan Chee)