

Short notes for our 1st Feb 2018 Thursday class.

Audio mp3 : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180201.mp3>

Whiteboard Note : <https://i2.wp.com/broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180201.jpg>

1. Bro Teoh welcomed three newcomers to the session. Bro Khor mentioned that he had attended **S.N. Goenka's meditation** in the past. Bro Teoh also mentioned about **Bro Chia from Singapore** who had also attended S. N. Goenka's meditation sessions **before attending Bro Teoh's classes and retreats**. Bro Chia is now very different because of his new understanding of what meditation is all about.

2. Bro Teoh's sessions are **informal** so anyone **is free to come and leave anytime and ask or share whatever dharma understanding** they have. When we understand how **unique** the Buddha is (besides being the **wisest and most virtuous living being ever to be born**), we will have **deep respect** and **gratitude** towards the Buddha. His teaching *when put to practice* can bring about **great transformation** leading to **liberation** of minds. The purpose of this Vipassana training is **to insight** (or *Passana*) into 'Vi' - all the 3 **universal characteristics** of **nature** (impermanence, suffering state and non-self or empty nature of existence). *All physical, mental and nature's phenomena exhibit these characteristics*. Once we *can insight into this*, our understanding of life becomes very different. Our **wrong view** or **self-delusion** will be **rooted out and enlightenment in the here and the now** becomes possible. After we have developed the *understanding of the Buddha's teaching*, we can share it with more people.

3. Bro Teoh inform the newcomers that the class normally starts at 8.10am. The first session is the pre puja which starts with the **offerings of puja items** by Kalyanamittas through their **generosity, wholesomeness and understanding**. The offering is **done mindfully** to develop spiritual faculties of **faith or saddha and sati**. So, everything is done *with understanding and mindfulness*. This is followed by the *puja chanting* which helps to develop *further understanding* via *allowing Kalyanamittas* to recall to mind the essential dharma such as the *9 great virtues of the Buddha*, the taking of refuges, etc. Taking of refuges in the **Triple Gem** also helps Kalyanamittas *cultivate affinity* with the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. By *renewing the 5 precepts*, Kalyanamittas are reminded of the **dangers of violating these precepts** which can cause karmic downfall. The reciting of puja offerings also reinforces understanding of the **significance** of these offerings. In short, the puja chanting helps Kalyanamittas in their cultivation.

4. It is **important to use the trained mind state to live the daily life**. **Sati Sampajanna** or mindfulness with **clear comprehension of every action and every movement in the present moment will bring about heedfulness**. Bro Teoh quoted Dhammapada **Verse 21: Heedfulness is the path to the Deathless; heedlessness is the path to the dead. The heedful never die; the heedless are as if dead**. Dhammapada **Verse 22: The wise ones distinctly understanding the difference between heedfulness and heedlessness will intent on heedfulness**. When they intent on heedfulness, they will **rejoice** in the realm of the Ariyas (Enlightened ones). **Verse 23: The constantly meditative, ever mindful and steadfast ones will realize the supreme bond free enlightenment** which is Nibbana.

5. Hence, we should hold onto this cultivation steadfastly. We need only two things – first, **stabilize** the mind to be **ever mindful** and second, use it to cultivate the **meditation as taught by the Buddha** (namely the Noble 8-fold

Path) especially so to cultivate the **4 foundations of mindfulness** which is also part of the Noble 8-Fold Path. The 4th foundation of mindfulness which is Dhammanupassana has 5th category of practices. They are 1. Mindfulness of the 5 mental hindrances, 2. Mindfulness of the five aggregates of Form and mind, 3. Mindfulness of the six internal and six external sense bases, 4. Mindfulness of the **seven factors of enlightenment** and 5. Mindfulness of the **4 Noble Truths**). As we develop this meditation, wisdom will arise. If we are on the right path, the seven factors of enlightenment **will keep on arising**. Finally, if we cultivate the meditation as taught by the Buddha (the Noble 8fold Path), it will lead to the end of all suffering. So, the real meditation is the **Noble 8-fold Path** of the **4th Noble Truth**.

6. **Reporting of meditation** – Bro Kok Loon reported that **he felt anger** when he first started his meditation. Then, later, when he started to follow Bro Teoh’s meditation guidelines, he managed to bring his drifting mind back to finally experience the **silence within**; it was as if he was the only one in the meditation hall. According to Bro Teoh most human beings are **heedless most of the time (throughout the day)** and their minds are **not silent** within. One need to be patient during meditation. When **we allow things to be**, eventually (*not long after*), the mind will **stabilize**. Anger arises because of *accumulated memory* stored in the brain. Human beings accumulate their life’s **experiences, both good and bad as memory**. As **thoughts are response to memories**, hence, **these conditioned mind states** can arise. But when we understand them to be *condition-arising, not us and allow them to be without suppressing or controlling them*, they will *cease to be after some time*. Then the **mind returns to its original state of inner peace and calmness before the stirring**. So, meditation is very easy if we understand this.

7. Bro Teoh explained the five aggregates of Form and Mind. At every moment of consciousness, it is just the **pure awareness**. But, the brain with its **views and opinions and conditioning (memory)** will **input the content of consciousness** hence *forming the thought*. This means the contents of consciousness have gone into that space and manifest as a thought. Hence Thought = consciousness + its content. The consciousness is like a receptacle that receives the content then it becomes a thought and is activated. Initially our **true mind is just spacious awareness**. Then suddenly the **mind focuses** on something via our *sense perception* and shrinks that spacious awareness into this small space to form the thought after we *input the contents through memory, views and opinions*. The external form enters the mind via perception, so the four aggregates of mind (feelings, perception, sankhara, consciousness) together with the external mental form perceived develops the five aggregates within. This is how thought arise.

8. We are **conditioned through our knowledge, views, opinions and belief system** obtained via the media, our education and our interaction with society. If we **cling** on to our phobias, scars of memories, conditioning, etc. they will triggered off the corresponding thoughts when we meditate. The mental hindrances will take over. To be free from this, we should develop the meditation via understanding. **Relax, be silent within** and **allow the mental hindrances** to *cease on its own*. Besides, in the midst of our daily life, we **should not pay attention** to thoughts that are **unfit for attention**. If we *pay attention to them*, the *un-arisen mental hindrances* will **arise** and the *arisen mental hindrances* will **intensify**. Understand that it’s just a thought, it arises and passes away moment to moment, so why give meaning to such thoughts until we are overwhelmed by suffering. To develop wisdom and to be free from this, we should understand that *since thought is response to memory*, it will become weaker if we **do not feed it** with *more mental and emotional* thought energy. We should understand that people are just the way they are. Tell ourselves that since it is due to my karmic past, if I need to ask for forgiveness and **take care of karma** I will just do them. That is **right view**.

9. **When the mind is trained, it will listen to you.** Just like playing badminton, if we train until we are very skilful then we will know how to play well. As for swimming, if we understand that our body is lighter than water then we **do not need to struggle** to keep afloat because the body via its **natural buoyancy** will float on its own. So, meditation is the same, our **true mind before the stirring** is already the **pure awareness, the silent or meditative mind**. If the **mundane mind is heedless** with a lot of thinking, **do not fight or suppress the hindrances** but allow them to be. It will return to its **natural state** (before the stirring) on its own. One only **need to train the mind until it listens to us**. The trained mind will **knows how to act**. We should use the trained mind to **arise the right thoughts** following Noble 8fold Path.

10. There are two ways to meditate. First, we can use the **mind sweeping method to decondition the habitual thinking**. Another way is to **cultivate the spiritual faculties**. **Do not fight** the *mental hindrances* but overcome them by cultivating the **opposite 5 spiritual faculties**. Develop the spiritual faculties until they become *balas* so that our faith etc. become unshakeable. To **stabilize** the meditative mind, we can use Anapanasatti. Eventually, **the silent mind enters sati**. Throughout the day, the mind will then be so aware that there is **no need to train it anymore**. But, initially, we need to train it. Once there is *sati*, wisdom will arise because **we can see truth everywhere**, we can see the *characteristics of nature* at every moment, every instant. So, this is what meditation is all about. A trained mind with Samadhi is **incapable of reacting** because the **awareness is so stable and sharp**. The transformed mind will understand life and change over **to a new way of heedful living**. Life becomes beautiful when there is heedfulness.

11. However, the **untrained mind is heedless and it thinks a lot** and mental hindrances will be there at every moment of perception. This hinders the mind from entering the meditative state. If it becomes habitual (in the midst of life), we don't stand a chance to liberate ourselves from suffering.

12. The **moment we are silent without thought, we are already aware**. We will experience the *silent mind in stillness, having calmness, joy, no fear and no anxiety*. This type of mind is much more superior to the **agitated heedless thinking mind**. The teaching is indeed so beautiful. It is important to write out all the pointers after listening to each talk **to reinforce** your understanding. Science and Technology has advanced so fast because we understand the scientific laws that governs life and existence. Similarly, if we understand the **spiritual laws**, we will come to the understanding of **who we are** and **what we are** then we will **not be deceived** by the 5 aggregates of form and mind and the phenomena world anymore.

13. For most human beings, the minute we perceive something, we start to think. The *thought process* moves so **fast** and billions of consciousness can arise within a second. *Since man can do only one thing at a time, so we are either mindful (aware within) or we are lost in thought*. It is **best to stay aware** at the **heart or mind base area** so that *we do not dwell on what we hear or see* etc. Enlightened beings **don't dwell** but are **aware all the time** because they *have developed the ability* to have the **spacious awareness (without a Centre)** and **specific phenomena awareness** at all times especially so for those whose **mundane minds have collapsed** and their nature had shine forth.

14. During meditation, we do not necessarily have to stick to the **sitting posture** though it is more stable and more recommended. We can sit on a couch or lie down to develop the training of the mind. What is more important is to have **mindfulness and clear comprehension** of all things that arise *within the present moment* and be **aware of all**

the connecting movements. There is ***no need to torture*** oneself. Bear in mind that the key supports for ***awareness based meditation*** are to be ***relaxed, silent*** and ***aware within***.