

## SHORT NOTES FOR THE THURSDAY CLASS DATED 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2018

Audio : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Teoh-Thu-180531.mp3>

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1. Bro Teoh started the sharing by discussing the Sunday class short notes dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018. It contains the final instructions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Patriarch. It also summarizes all that we need to know about the cultivation. The ultimate cultivation takes us directly to the true mind or true nature.
2. Three Kalyanamittas asked very good questions which helped to complement the whole understanding of the cultivation. The self-nature or oneness nature as expounded by Master Hui Neng is the **Source** of all thing which is also the unborn, the unconditioned where everything arises from.
3. Master Shen Xiu has yet to realize his true mind when he wrote his poem for the 5<sup>th</sup> Patriarch. Bro Teoh explained that Master Shen Xiu **had mistaken** his **mundane mind** to be his **true mind** hence his mistaken focus on cultivating with his mundane mind. This was the reason for his failure to penetrate the true dharma.
4. According to Master Hui Neng, if we do not create through the mundane mind, there is no duality. Bro Teoh continued to explain that **when we use words created by concepts and ideas**, there is **division** (such as race, religion etc). There will also be concepts of right and wrong, good and bad etc. These are relative truth, not ultimate truth.
5. It is impossible to use the mundane mind to do away with duality. Hence, the practice of meditation should be understood. It should not be done to just overcome defilements and cling on to good mind states. Reason why the Buddha said 'Imasmim sati idam hoti, Imasmim asati idam na hoti' – 'With the arising of this that arises; with the cessation of this that ceases.
6. If one does not create, things are just the way they are, no right, no wrong, no good no bad. This is a very important understanding. This is wisdom. When we can accept things as they are, there is no more duality. So, we will always be at peace and there would be no more problems.
7. Through delusion, the mundane mind creates duality. It is therefore important for cultivators to straighten their views. *When there is **right view***, the mind **will not stir and react to sense experiences** because one can accept the reality of the moment. There is no more thought proliferation. The true mind will *be able to see things as they are*.
8. Within the stillness and awareness, there is direct seeing which is **unaffected** by memory, views, opinions and conditioning. One can then understand the true **suchness nature** of all conditioned things.
9. The form and mind is just a vehicle and tool for us to come to this existential world so use it appropriately with wisdom to live the noble life. With the wisdom of the unconditioned borne of the direct seeing, this form and mind will not be deluded by the phenomenal world anymore. Hence the reason why we should learn how to use the conditioned arising mundane mind yet not be deceived by it.
10. Bro Teoh advised fellow Kalyanamittas **not to waste time on tinted merits**. Many Buddhists like to do dana. Merits alone cannot free our mind; without wisdom, there is still the concept of self that wants to do merits. Hence the action that follows comes from greed (subtle craving or desire) for those merits. Relying on tinted merits is not a safe refuge and it will not bring about wisdom to free the form and mind.
11. Awakening to the truth and reality is not about **sitting without understanding**. We *have to cultivate until* we can reach the **silent mind stage** and then proceed from there **to realize the true mind** via the **direct seeing**. Otherwise, it is very difficult for one to awaken.
12. Bodhidharma was the first Patriarch in China, the 28<sup>th</sup> after Sakyamuni Buddha. When Bodhidharma first arrived in a monastery in China, the monks didn't respect him. Bodhidharma knew the monks were practicing meditation wrongly.

Eventually, Bodhidharma was able to guide them back to the correct cultivation after making them realize that they **did not have the basic understanding** of the two aspects of mind as yet.

13. From the **self-nature**, everything arises. It is **complete by itself** and how amazing it is that **all dharmas** arise from this self-nature. From the self-nature (the source) arises pure awareness. We can use this to cultivate even though the Self-nature cannot come out and live life. Bro Teoh reminded us of Dhammapada Verses 1 and 2.
14. **Mind is the forerunner of all thing**, when mind arises, the **entire phenomenal world arises**. The mundane mind which is **thought based cannot meditate** because it is **egoic** hence **deluded**, **thinking the phenomenal world is real**. The **ego** which is the **'atta'** or the **personality craves to own and possess things**. This leads to **clinging** and **grasping**. When it **cannot get what it desires**, the egoic mind become **unhappy** and **stirred** leading to more karmic negativity. Hence, one **should not meditate** using the **mundane mind which is still within the field of thoughts**. Thought based meditation cannot free the mind because the dharma is 'akaliko' - beyond thought (the timeless).
15. But if we **learn to silent the mundane mind to mindfully observe** then wisdom can arise **to retrospectively** reverse everything; this cultivation can enable the form and mind **to realize** the **true mind** via wisdom.
16. All koans are inquiries leading to the **silent mind**. Hence, the **mundane mind must cease** to realize ones **true nature** otherwise **we are wasting our time** following blind instructions to meditate without understanding.
17. The **Buddha's teaching** on **right view with regards to the Law of Karma** will enable us to understand how **Dhammapada Verses 1, 2 & 183 (the advice of all Buddha - to avoid all evil, do good and purify mind) come about**.
18. The cultivation will enable us to realize **impermanence and the unreality of form and mind** via comprehending that **everything within the conditioned world is dependent-originating and not real**.
19. **Ignorance leads to unending births and deaths** and **without wisdom**, living beings will **be trapped in samsara**.
20. All methods and techniques are a waste of time if we do not know **how to silent the mind** (the analogy of allowing the pool of water to settle down after the bullock cart has passed over it during the Buddha's time).
21. The thought wants to practice but when we understand **only wisdom** frees, then our focus in cultivation is different. We can then accord and flow within the **conditioned world** following the **famous Zen sayings** on the 3 types of seeing: 'Seeing Mountain as mountain (conventional or mundane seeing); seeing mountains as not mountains (direct seeing); and finally seeing mountains as mountains again (seeing things as they are or wise/suchness seeing)'. These are **different stages of seeing** depending on the level of one's cultivation. Duality will always exist within the existential world.
22. The best way to deal with sense experiences that impinge the mind is, **to silent the mind to see things as they are**. Using **knowledge** from memory is **not wisdom**. It is better to approach mind states like anger etc. using the 3<sup>rd</sup> way as taught by the Buddha **via just being silent, aware** and **be with the anger** (or any other emotion) then eventually **anger which is condition arising ceases** on its own when one **does not react to stir** the mundane anymore. But we cannot use it always because we have to live life. So, the best way is to reflect and contemplate via the 4<sup>th</sup> way to trace its origination factors until the understanding becomes very clear.
23. The Buddha advised us **to retrospectively** reverse the stirring process via wisdom to see things as they are. 'Why did I react? What is the cause?' It is due to our **wrong views**. Learn **how to straighten our views** via understanding that if we have duality and concepts, suffering will arise. We have been conditioned to behave this way through the layers of conditioning since time immemorial. It's the form and mind that needs to awaken to the 3 universal characteristics of anicca, dukkha and anatta. Without the awakening, it is very hard to break free from delusion.
24. We are lucky because there are teachers who have discovered the 'prototype wisdom' for us to follow in cultivation. There is **no need to search** or **find out via trial and error our self**. Bro Teoh has the understanding and therefore his sharing can make our cultivation easier via acceptance of the reality.
25. Always bear in mind that whatever that arises, there are causes and conditions behind. Human beings are the way they are due to karmic conditioning. This is what dharma is all about. By cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path together with the Four Right Efforts, wisdom will keep on arising. We should continue to contemplate until the understanding

- becomes so stable** that in the midst of life, at every moment of sense perception, the mind does not stir and react anymore. If there is *yoniso manasikara* (wise attention) at the moment of sense experience the mind will be quiet and at ease. So overcoming duality is not about using knowledge. What we need is wisdom at the moment of sense consciousness. Otherwise, it is very difficult to overcome the habitual tendencies.
26. Once wisdom arises, everything falls into place. There is that nature within which is independent of thinking. This awareness within can be aware of silence and stillness in nature even though there is no vibration or sense data.
  27. All beings are connected to the self-nature (the eternal nature) which is never born.
  28. When one understands this, meditation becomes easy. Meditation is not about right or wrong, not about what one must do. We need to understand what we are doing in the name of meditation. The mundane mind needs to be trained for it to realize the true mind. Not until there is mindfulness, there is no meditation leading to wisdom.
  29. In the midst of life, we should cultivate the **daily mindfulness**. Learn to see the **physical, mental** and **nature's** flows *within the phenomenal world*. This is what daily mindfulness is all about and when our *kayanupassana* is stable, then *only can we have the ability to see mind* to cultivate *cittanupassana*. Many people think that they can see mind. In actual fact, most of them are only using thought to observe.
  30. Only when the **daily mindfulness is very stable** and *one is aware most of the time* with the **silent mind**, is there *sati sampajanna*. This *sati* is either specific phenomena awareness (awareness and phenomena move as one, or spacious awareness without a center).
  31. Human beings are mostly too busy thinking, planning and worrying about life. Cultivation is to reverse all these negative tendencies so that one becomes heedful and aware most of the time.
  32. Learn to live life instead of thinking, planning and worrying about life. If we cannot do this, we cannot cultivate. Most **heedless people are doing the reverse** because *their thought is always active*. They are **hardly aware**. It is important to do **our daily religious routine** and **bowing** mindfully **to decondition** the heedless thinking mind.
  33. Try not to accumulate through memory so that there is space in the brain. We are just form and mind. So, as real as it can be, it is only within the moment. Split second it is gone. There is no reality in life, 'Hence Hey no you! Hey no me!' Be wary of accumulating scars of memory or toxic memory that makes one heedless.
  34. Whenever there is *avijja* we cannot deal with sense experience. So, we should contemplate the dharma until very clearly. Don't worry about what people tell you just investigate and continuously straighten your views.
  35. Reading from short notes dated 27<sup>th</sup> May: *When there is awakening, wisdom that arise will be connected to the form and mind. The form and mind (or human being) is no longer deluded, one can say it has become enlightened. However, this form and mind is not you and it is still subjected to the Law of Karma. This must be understood so that one can cultivate correctly.*

(Draft prepared by Puan Chee)