

Outline short notes for our Thursday talk dated 28th JUNE 2018

Audio : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180628.mp3>

1. Bro Teoh read through the **21st June 2018 Thursday class outline short notes** and explained **certain key points** as he reads them. One of the key point is on: **Anger, fear, phobias, greed** and *other emotions were never you* because they were **not present before the stirring of the mundane mind**. These emotions were **not inherent** within your **true nature**. They are actually **conditioned arising mind states, dependent-originating** following the 12 links or paticca samuppada as taught by the Buddha. With this understanding, one can just allow *such mind states to settle down on their own to enable one to realize* that **natural state of inner peace, stillness and tranquility before the stirring**.
2. Bro Teoh pointed out that **a common mistake** among cultivators is to ask such questions (when they want to learn meditation): 'what meditation do you teach? Is it vipassana?' Bro Teoh **reiterated** that vipassana **cannot be practice** because it is **an insight or awakening**. '**Vi**' means the *3 universal characteristics of nature* and '*passana*' means to **insight into**. Hence, 'vipassana is **an insight** and **not a practice**. Such questions comes from the **thought** that *doesn't understand*. For vipassana is *an awakening, an insight wisdom that arises when the mind is silent and just aware to insight into phenomena*. The awareness will be aware of what is going on within the mind. There *is no thought, mind or knowledge* involved in this realization. It is just **an insight into truth** when the mind **becomes so quiet, sensitive and mindful**. Most meditations are **thought-based** which use thoughts to come up with **methods and techniques** to meditate. Then who meditates? The **thought meditates** via following the **series of instructions given** not knowing that **these methods and techniques are just skilful means to anchor and train the mind**. Without this basic understanding, one will think that one is 'practicing the so-called meditation' or doing vipassana.
3. According to the Buddha, meditation is **very simple when you understand**. It is just *developing heedfulness*. Just train the mind to be **ever mindful** and use this trained mind **to cultivate the Noble 8-fold Path**. As we progress with **more right views**, *avijja (ignorance) is weakened*, then the **next link** which is **sankhara** (mental activities) will be less so there is **more awareness** and **less heedless habitual thinking**. Without the habitual thinking, one is **aware most** of the time. With the *further straightening of one's views to weaken the avijja further*, the stillness of mind will grow more and more until one day, when **avijja is no more** the **awakening happens**.
4. Some people have their **past cultivations** to support them. People like Sariputra, Kondanna and the five ascetics were able to awaken through **listening or reflecting** on the Buddha's words via Suttamaya panna and Cintamaya panna (the 1st and 2nd turning wisdom). But most **normal cultivators** will **need to stabilize** their 2nd turning wisdom *to realize the silent mind to awaken to the three universal characteristics*. Hence, whether awakening is via Suttamaya panna, Cintamaya panna or Bhavanamaya panna **depends very much** on the *individual's past cultivations*.
5. When one's **spiritual faculties** are developed, the **minute we sit, awareness is already present**. One only needs to **stabilize it**. The determination to be *ever mindful to cultivate the Noble 8-fold Path* will keep cultivators on track leading to the awakening when the **conditions are met**.

6. However, if the spiritual faculties are not present, then one cannot meditate unless one uses a skilful means or technique **to overcome** the *five mental hindrances* temporarily. The five mental hindrances hinder one from entering the meditative state of inner peace and inner awareness. Then the question arises why one has the mental hindrances. The reason is due to the habitual thinking mind creating thoughts through avijja. The mind-sweeping method is an effective tool because it can help decondition the heedless thinking mind. There are no thoughts involved. *As thinking reduces, the mind becomes quieter but this state is still not stable.* This is why a skilful mean or an object of meditation is needed to stabilize this mind. The Buddha recommended anapanasatti. Eventually, the mind becomes more and more quiet leading to **passadhi** and eventually **stillness of mind**. This is the meditative mind which can make one mindful while in the midst of life.
7. Once the mind enters sati, there is no need to use any object of meditation anymore. Many people are so fearful when they experience no breath. This is actually a sign of good progress. Bro Teoh mentioned that his nature gained this understanding through his own past cultivation even though he had no prior knowledge of meditation at that time. He went into absorption the first time he did that. But later, another Thai monk cum teacher Phra Ajahn Yantra taught him the **highest meditation** via developing the **daily mindfulness** and this made him realize that his mind was still in a **conditioned** state of appana samadhi. Bro Teoh decided to **release** the concentrated mind state energy he was in and use the **silent mind** to meditate via the daily mindfulness while in the midst of life. His sati was so stable that even the *most subtle movement* of mind could be detected. He was **fully aware throughout the day**. At every moment of sense door consciousness and perception, **he was in sati**. The **awareness and phenomena moved as one** and there was **no thinking** at all. There was just **pure awareness** in every moment of sense perception.
8. Human beings can only do one thing at a time. We are either silent without thought or busy caught up with the thought-process. We react very fast to our sense perceptions due to our habitual tendencies and self-delusion. Instead of using the mind to live life and think only when necessary, we have given thought so much meaning that it has dominated our life to think, stir and react every time we come into contact with sense experience. Through our daily constant stirring of the mind via likes and dislikes (as these are mental hindrances) they will prevent us from entering the meditative state of inner peace and inner awareness, thereby making us **heedless**.
9. Mental suppression, concentration, noting, verbalization etc. will cause the thought to be even more active. Bro Teoh used the analogy of swimming with a float to explain how one should meditate. Applying Archimedes' Principle to swimming, the weight of the water displaced by our body is equal to the up thrust (buoyancy force) created. If we just relax and do not struggle, this up thrust which is equivalent to the mass of water displaced by our body will push the body up because the natural state of the body is buoyancy i.e. the body is lighter than water. (Similarly the natural state of the mind is tranquility, stillness and aware). If we know how to relax, we can swim easily. Similarly, meditation becomes very easy if we just relax and silent (i.e. *do not struggle or try to 'meditate' via verbalization*). The moment we are without thought, we are already aware. So, there is no need to try and be aware.

10. The float is useful to assist us to swim at first. Similarly, methods and techniques in meditation are skilful means like the float. Initially, one may need them but eventually, we have to give them up. As long as we don't give up all these methods and techniques or any object of meditation, we will never understand how to meditate. Once the mind has entered sati, there is no need for a meditation object to anchor the mind anymore. It is already aware naturally.

11. Master Hui Neng's approach *takes us directly to the true mind*. **Without thought**, we are **already aware** and that is your **true mind**. Then one can see clearly with mindfulness how avijja (mainly self-delusion) cause one **to react** and **stir one's mind** thereby *creating the mental hindrances*. These mental hindrances are the source of **evil roots**. Avijja arises due to our *wrong views*. So, Bro Teoh advised us **to straighten our views first**. When sankharas cease, we can then insight into phenomena. Most of you have been taught the **traditional thought based meditation** until you are so **conditioned**. It makes you believe that meditation must involve the thought **not knowing** that it is this thinking or chattering mind that you use to meditate is the one creating more sankharas to delude you.

12. In the field of meditation and spirituality, thinking is **not needed**. What is needed is **wisdom**. Thinking is only necessary for us to use it *to live life, to develop skill and knowledge and perform certain mechanical tasks* in life. Thought is a tool for us to use hence the **user of thought** is **very important**. If the user of thoughts is wisdom then thoughts become right thoughts.

13. Bro Teoh mentioned the **sad case** of a college student who shot himself in the toilet recently. Such cases happen due to avijja (lack of understanding) and this shows the power of thought which can delude and deceive us into acting out foolishly. It is not about being rich or poor. A lot of such cases are due to karmic consequences from the past.

14. It is important for cultivators to understand that no amount of practice can free us. It is **only understanding** or **wisdom** that can free and liberate one's mind.

(Above draft was prepared by Puan Chee.)