

## OUTLINE SHORT NOTES OF THURSDAY CLASS DATED 2ND AUGUST 2018

Audio : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Teoh-Thu-180802.mp3>

Kevatta sutta discussion note : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/180802-Kevatta-sutta-forsharing-by-Bro-Teoh.pdf>

### A. Instructions before meditation

- Just maintain **awareness** and **eventually** the **silent mind** will **return** to its **original state of inner peace, calmness** and **mindfulness**. **Stabilize it** to arise the **understanding**.
- There is **no need** to do anything. When we are **silent** *within*, we will be **sensitive** and **aware**. The **understanding** will **eventually arise** for us to understand *how we function as human beings*. We will also **be able to understand** all the **teachings** that the **Buddha taught** and **see them** in our own *form and mind*.
- We will understand **Paticca Samupadda** via our meditation; how *dependent* on **ignorance, sankhara** or **mental activities** *arises* and how **due to delusion** we get ourselves **entangled** when **mental activities** arise. Upon contact, the 7 universals *will arise* **simultaneously** and **feeling** will **not** remain as **pure feeling** if we lack **wisdom** and because of that **feeling** will be **conditioned** into **craving straight away** leading to **grasping, becoming** and **birth** *hence* triggering off the whole mass of suffering.
- There are **two types** of **births** in dependent origination – *mental and physical*. Physical birth only happens once in a life time. However, **mental birth** takes place **every moment** when there is **ignorance**, leading to **craving, grasping** and **becoming** via our *wrong views* and *mental conditioning*.
- If we are **sensitive** and **mindful** enough, we will **understand** how the *contents of consciousness is inputted* (based on our views and mental conditioning) to cause the arising of wrong thoughts when **we act according to memory** instead of **acting according to wisdom** following **Noble 8-fold path**.
- The **evil roots** of *Greed, Hatred and Delusion* are so strong yet *living beings* **cannot see them** because they **lack mindfulness** which is the *sensitivity of mind in awareness*.
- With the **5 spiritual faculties in place** the *opposite 5 mental hindrances* will be **overcome** then our cultivation will eventually lead to the **realization** of the **true mind** (which is always there). This happens *when the mundane mind ceases* then the true mind's **original state** of inner peace, inner calmness and inner awareness will be **revealed**. We should always bear in mind the **4 key supports** for **awareness based meditation** of *relax, aware, 24hour* and *Trust* to guide us in our cultivation.

## B. Questions & Answers (Q&A) after Meditation

- Sister Tammy asked Bro Teoh why some people say we should **practice** the four Brahma Viharas when it is the mind doing it. She has experienced that it is **not a practice** but those qualities can just arise naturally via understanding.

### Bro Teoh's answer:

- a) People who **do not understand** will use *verbalization* and *parroting* when they do it.
- b) When we understand, we will do it **differently**. We should **reflect** and **contemplate** on the qualities of these 4 *Brahma Viharas mind states* of **metta, karuna, mudita** and **upekkha**.
- c) When we *cultivate correctly*, metta becomes **universal love**, then metta does not turn into anger or hatred when things don't go our way. Regardless of the outcome, the love towards all is always there when there is understanding. The true cultivator will always have love and is **incapable of negativity** despite whatever circumstances he is in. These qualities are **radiated out** from the heart regardless of whether the one receiving it is a friend or an enemy. There is **no prejudice** or **preference** as to who the recipient is.
- d) Many people hold a **misperception** about vegetarianism. It is **not what we eat** that makes us **pure** or **compassionate**. If one's level of cultivation is **not at that level of refinement** yet, then becoming a vegetarian *has not much meaning* because their **basic defilements** (evil roots) are still *very gross and strong*.
- e) However, if one has the **understanding after reaching a certain level of cultivation** that is a different matter. For such a person, it is *good because by then he can't even harm or kill small insects like ants, flies etc.* So **compassion** has to come about via **true understanding**.
- f) Bro Teoh shared with fellow Kalyanamittas how he had such an experience when he was at his second last teacher's house. He saw many ants when he opened up the storeroom of the house. He tried his very best *not to cause any harm or fear* to the tiny insects when he swept them out slowly. He could see and feel the ants scurrying around in fear in the process.
- g) Bro Teoh's nature was **so sensitive** that he could **feel the fear** among the ants. Immediately, he asked for forgiveness. He experienced another incident subsequently which he knew was karmic in nature. He was bitten by ants at another place when he accidentally stepped on them (their nest) unknowingly. Again, he **asked for forgiveness**. Since then, he had no more of such encounters with ants.
- h) It is **understanding** that will allow us **to act in such a way** so as **not to cause** fear to others. There is no more mental intention (cetana) to harm or to kill.

- i) During the Buddha's time, Devadatta tried to cause a schism in the order by asking the Buddha to implement the prohibition of taking meat within the monk's community.
  - j) The Buddha **understood** how important it was to have the **proper synergy** between the lay people and the monk's community. The laity **offered food** to the practicing monks who are **worthy of offering**, thus helping to *sustain* their **monastic life** while receiving merits in return.
  - k) If the Buddha **had imposed** strict vegetarianism, it would have **caused a lot of unnecessary** difficulty to the lay people. Hence, he refused to do so.
  - l) Bro Teoh emphasized the need to understand what we do in the name of meditation. We need to find out and investigate into the truth taught by the Buddha before following his advice to develop our cultivation.
  - m) Bro Teoh shared one of his experience during the early days of his cultivation - when he suddenly (for no apparent reason) started to abstain from eating meat for a period of time after his cultivation had reached certain level of refinement. However, his body became weaker. He then realized that vegetarian meals were not suitable for his this life's body. It was as if the DNA that came with this birth was not suitable for vegetarian food. Then during one of his meditation, he came to the **realization** that his nature (in the past) had taken a **special vow** '*to take across all living beings that manifest as food for him to eat*'. From that understanding, he reverted to take his food as normal again basing on what the body need.
  - n) There was this lady (Bro Teoh's dharma friend who lived in Australia) who became a vegetarian for a long time **after recovering** from a *brain tumor operation* in Australia. Then many years later she contracted cancer, and she decided to go for the chemo treatment. But she felt very weak both physically and mentally after the chemo treatment so she sought the advice of Bro Teoh. Brother Teoh explained to her that her **immune system** was weak because this **chemo drugs** kills all cells (*good and bad*) and it also will **affect her mental emotions severely** thereby *making her weak, tired, miserable and sickly (often accompany by suicidal thoughts)*. So she need to be **mentally strong** to **take care** of her **mind states** and **physical health**. In that sense, if she need to eat *non-vegetarian* good and appropriate nutritious food she must. Eventually, she **understand** and was *mentally prepared* then she returned to consume nutritious and healthy food (with understanding) and managed to recover beautifully. This was more than 6 years ago.
  - o) Again, Bro Teoh emphasized that it is **not** what we eat that makes us **pure**. It is **heedfulness** leading to **wisdom** and **understanding** that is more important to *make us virtuous* and **wise** thereby enabling us to live the good life.
- Sister Tammy expressed her curiosity as to why people say we have to do this or that when everything becomes so natural if wisdom is present.

**Bro Teoh's answer:**

- a) Bro Teoh shared about his experience when his mother asked him to hold on tightly to the chicken which would be slaughtered. He let go of it when he saw the knife which his mother was holding. He was not capable of supporting what her mother was about to do.
- b) We should *always inquire, investigate and find out first before accepting any advice, so that we are not gullible to follow blindly* what others preach to us.
- c) We **cannot** just *imitate* what the Buddha did – like how he walk (bare footed), sit, eat, etc. **hoping to become a Buddha like Him one day** because the Buddha is the **embodiment** of his *wisdom and perfection of virtues*. By following what he did physically will not make you a Buddha because all these are **form dharma** that has **nothing to do** with **his cultivation of wisdom and virtue**.
- d) Bro Teoh advised Kalyanamittas to read through the *recently printed* book (75<sup>th</sup> lesson of the Sixth Patriarch Platform sutra) and **gain insights** from the transcript book. Bro Teoh read through pages 14, 15 and 16 of the book to highlight the 'importance of **understanding** what one is doing in the name of meditation instead of just following instructions to meditate blindly'.
- e) It is important that we *develop our daily mindfulness* and **stabilize it to live life** so that *most of the time, we are mindful and without thought to cultivate the Noble 8-fold path*.

**C. Other sharing by Brother Teoh:**

- Bro Teoh shared with us **a few emails** from the United States Dhammasukha site. They touched on **consciousness: mundane and supra mundane**, the four elements, enlightenment and the law of dependent origination etc. This site is hosted by Bhante Vimalaramsi who teaches the 6Rs technique of meditation in the States.

(Above draft outline short notes were prepared by Puan Chee)