

Brother Teoh's 23rd August 2018 Thursday Talk Outline Short Notes

Audio : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Teoh-Thu-180823.mp3>

1. Sister PG shares her recent China spiritual trip experiences. It was a very good but tough trip for her because of her health condition. As she was **prone** to *car sickness* while travelling on *winding mountain roads*, she *purged and vomited* for quite a while when travelling on the bus on such roads and it took a toll on her physically and mentally. Initially she had difficulty walking up to the temple at the summit. One important lesson she learnt during the whole trip is **Mindfulness and patient endurance**. She then walked up the steps, feeling light and like only the feet touching the steps. It was *easier to walk up* with **mindfulness** and **patient endurance**.

2. Brother Teoh explained that *mindful and patient endurance* do help. When *there is thinking*, it stirs up **memories** as sister PG is **prone** to *motion sickness*. The road was much more winding than the road up Cameron Highlands. The second day, she could mindfully walk up the steps by silencing her mind. Brother Teoh further explained that when the mind is **not involved** to *remind her of her problem*, the *problem does not exist*. She could even recover and feel good. All in all, the long stretches of mountain climbing were physically draining. On the way going down to another temple from the summit, luckily the tour guide used a short cut to link us back to the cable car; differing from the way going back up then down again otherwise it was not easy for the body. **Mindfulness, awareness, faith and patient endurance were important**.

3. For Brother Teoh, the fatigue pain in his feet only came on the **third day** because of age. However he persevered with understanding. Quinny too persevered with a walking stick at the age of 70.

4. Sister PG continued her sharing - saying for every step she took, she repeated the mantra '*love and gratitude*' to **persevere** while *keeping her faith*.

5. Brother Teoh stressed the importance of cultivating Khanti (patient endurance) *with wisdom and understanding then* perfecting this virtue via having love, vows, faith and compassion. When there is **Viriya** (spiritual zeal) and **saddha** (faith), one is able to **endure** with **understanding**. Endurance without understanding only leads to **suppression**.

6. Venerable Master Xu Yun in his biography book endured a lot of hardship. The temples he tried to rebuild were robbed. He had to gather people to help rebuild these temples. Disciples who have faith in him came to help and the **restored temples** later **flourished**. Brother Teoh and kalyanamittas visited these temples at and around Ji Zu mountain of Dali and they were beautiful. There was one where 11 of the past emperors of China had renounced to become Buddhist monks there.

7. First two days, they visited Dugu Lake and Shangri La where many **minority China tribal groups** who were mainly of *Tibetan descendants live*. These people cling onto a lot of **rites and rituals** that came about due to their more **primitive civilization**. They believe *by having their own ideology and tradition* will makes them different. But it also leads to a lot of problems too as it make them **rigid**. The *reason they need this ideology and tradition* is because they don't have a **guiding principle** to **live life**. One **peculiar** tradition they have is two men would marry one lady, as they have this belief that it is *easier for the two men to support one family*. These are rites and rituals that come out of tradition. The **second fetters** that **bind living beings to this world**, *according to the Buddha is* **attachment to rites and rituals**. So if one do not follow their tradition and marry another lady from **another tribe** or **tradition**, this person would end up as **an outcast, hated upon** by their own tribe. That is why they **can't have harmony** and **peace**. The Buddha **never taught ideology**. He taught instead the **Dhamma**, the **Truth**. With these truths, you **don't need** to *follow any ideology or tradition*

because you will understand the **nature's laws** (the 5 panca niyamas) that **govern all of life and existence** and *you will know how to live life accordingly*.

8. **Truth** is *something that can explain the way things are and how things come about so no need to have rites and rituals or superstitions etc. which are delusions that arise out of fear and ignorant*. When you **have truth**, you **do not need ideology or tradition to guide you to live life**. That is why during the early years, Brother Teoh discouraged his mother from continuing with her Chinese traditional practice of slaughtering chicken as offering to the deities then negotiating with them to gain back some favor and blessings from them – this is **not proper** because **first** it *involve killing the chicken* then **secondly** this is **not the dhamma way**. But when you have the Dhamma, the *understanding of the truth will enable you to live the noble life beautifully* via following the **advice of the Buddha to do good, avoid all evil and to purify the mind**. This is a **good enough** – a *very good guiding principle to live your life well*. These advices will enable you to take care of your Karma and develop wisdom to free our mind. With **wisdom developed** you will come to know who you are. What you are? And you will be able to avoid and overcome all problems and conflicts because you will not be deceived or deluded by the phenomena world anymore. That is how you break free. You will also understand that there is **no mark of a self and no mark of others and life but this form and mind of ours is subject to karma**. Your children have their own life; they have their own karma so let them decide how they want to live their life; **your duty as parent** is *to provide for their basic needs, support, guide and advice them accordingly*. This is **dhamma**.

9. Form and mind is subject to karma. Each and every individual form and mind must have this understanding to take care of their own karma. Otherwise it will lead to downfall and the karmic repercussion and negativity will hit back leading to suffering for this form and mind, regardless of where you are born. Then take the **Bodhisattva vows** following my **blue transcript book (Cultivating the Bodhisattva way)**. This understanding will protect you not only this life but also all of your subsequent births and lives. Your **karmic nature** will become beautiful, and then you can cultivate your **spiritual nature**. As you develop **more understanding and wisdom leading to more virtues, you become a truly beautiful being**. You then become a **blessing to all** and a **noble one** (that is an enlightened being with the **noble eightfold path qualities** in you). That is **what you need for life NOT ideology**.

10. **Ideology** comes from **thought**, from the word “Idea” *created by thought to start a tradition or a belief system to divide humanity*. In every country, ideology differs. It is all part of civilization and the evolution of consciousness.

11. Sister PG was **able to maintain mindfulness throughout the day**. She could feel beings were different at different locality and she seek their forgiveness. She finds that from this trip, her affinity is still with Quan Yin Bodhisattva. On two occasions, her feelings arose strongly showing her the affinity with Quan Yin Bodhisattva.

12. To **ask for forgiveness** is a *good practice* so that you can overcome any misunderstanding or suffering caused by you (whether knowingly or unknowingly) to others. Sometimes your negative thoughts could trigger conditions for these non-humans to be weary of your visit to their territory. Non-humans can read your mind and know what you are thinking. You also have to understand that at different places, beings are different, tradition or ideologies are different, religions are different too. Thus you need to be sensitive. The best is to radiate love and metta, to ask for forgiveness if you have caused any misunderstandings or inconvenience, and to wish them well-being and happiness. If you go to a hotel and can't sleep at night as things are disturbing you, sit quietly and radiate love and metta and talk to the non-humans **to seek their kind understanding**. After that you'd be able to sleep better.

13. Sister Elsie shared that she was glad to have joined the trip. Overall it was very **beautiful and meaningful**. **Everything unfolds beautifully**, the *weathers were very kind* to us even though it was the rainy season there.

Was also told by the China tour guide that Dali was raining ‘cats and dogs’ for 7 to 8 days before we arrived and the moment we arrived the weather became so beautiful – no rain and very good weather all the way till the last day of our trip. Foods were good. Thanks to Sister Padmasuri who recommended those good eatery places. When she walked up the temple, she walked mindfully. She also found that her body was very light, not too much problem for her to walk up the mountains. She was **happy during this entire spiritual trip** especially so on seeing how **it all unfolds so beautifully**. The **tiger leaping gorge** with waterfall flowing from on top of the mountain down to the gorge was also very beautiful. She used to have fear towards waterfall’s roaring water. However this time, **she was very calm**. *Could even meditate at the waterfall and gorge despite the roaring and gushing water ahead*. She **enjoyed the still energy and strong vibration** there. Weather was cooling too. She just followed the flow of the whole tour and it was **very smooth sailing** and **she was not tired**. **Dhamma discussions** for the first few nights were good – able to develop **better understanding of attachment to rites and rituals as a fetter**. Although there **were a lot of very beautiful dhamma sharing on cultivation** on the first night, but they were **not recorded** as there was no microphone. We intend to buy 2 sets of portable microphones so that we could be better equipped in the future.

14. There was a nunnery Jiu Lian Si (9 Lotus monastery) with **very meticulously crafted** Buddha and Bodhisattva rupas in their shrines. Its works **reflects their founder’s virtue and beautiful mind states and understanding**. That is they have the *virtues, patience, understanding and dhamma to do all these so meticulously*. The Abbess was also very warm, kind, understanding and friendly towards us. We **sincerely expressed our profound gratitude and special thanks** towards the Abbess and temple committee for **allowing us to visit and use their way place to have our meditation and dhamma session**. They also treated all of us to *a delicious vegetarian meal*. In return we make a **special donation to express our gratitude and thanks and at the same time establish affinity with them**.

15. Most tourists going to temples are to pray and make offering of cash donation only (Pai Pai Fo) whereas Brother Teoh’s spiritual trip is **different** because we kalyanamittas went **with dhamma understanding**. When they were at the nunnery, they pay their **respects to all the great beings natures, meditate, have dhamma session and chanting, etc**. Because of the chanting, the nuns and people there could feel that this group was different. Although facing earlier rejection upon their first request to use their hall, the abbess nun finally agreed for them to use the hall after talking to one of the local guide (Mr. Er) and hearing about their **earlier Emei shan, Pu To Sun and 6th Patriarch spiritual trips**. The nun knew from the chanting that this group was following the Theravada tradition. However, most of the kalyanamittas also have **great affinity with the Mahayana’s Buddhas and Bodhisattvas**. Before returning home, the nuns offered all the kalyanamittas, our guides and bus driver their **blessed** chains and pendants which have been chanted (Shuragama mantra) upon.

16. There are now more and more good monasteries in China due to their country’s **recent evolution** of consciousness. Even our Malaysian PM praised that China is so different now. He believes that China can be a great trading partner. They are **very innovative with good technology advancement** and we can learn from them.

17. Of the 1.3 billion Chinese, 950 million **do not** have religion due to the Cultural Revolution of the 60s. Only 350 million have religion – of this 60% is Buddhist, 20% Taoist, Islam is third and Christianity is fourth. The rest comprises minority groups with primitive religion (Animism) praying to rocks, trees, thunder etc.

18. Back then, **if you were born in China, you would be said to have bad karma** as there was much suffering then. Unlike these days, if you are born in China, **you are considered to have good karma with good financial means** to travel out of the country. With the **recent affluent** the temples in China received much more cash donation from their local tourists.

19. Dhamma **enables one to accept others and the world for what they are via understanding**. The Buddha said, 'mind is forerunner of all things, mind is chief, when mind arise, everything arise. If you don't train your mind (or develop heedfulness) you will act, think and speak with a **heedless mind**, then suffering would follow suit.' This is the universal truth and it is evergreen. The **only way to be free of suffering** is to **follow the advice of the Buddha**, to avoid Dhammapada verse 1 and **cultivate heedfulness**. When you are heedful, with a well **trained mind**, you **will act speak and think** with a **heedful mind**, *free of evil roots of greed, hatred and delusion* then **happiness will follow you** like the **shadow** that **never leaves you**. That's how you **should approach life and live life**. With this understanding **you would not be influenced** by what people do or say. You will have your **own understanding** of *what virtue is, what constitutes evil and how it leads to negativity of karma, downfall, suffering and misery*. Whatever you do, you cannot go against or violate the nature's law of karma.

20. A true story in Taiwan told by a monk called Hai Tao:

There was an old man with a dog. This dog was a female pregnant dog. Whenever the man leaves his house, the dog will chase up. But this time, the dog could not chase after him all the way as she was pregnant. It eventually stopped half way and gave birth to 7 puppies along the way. But the old man was not around to feed her. The dog went to seek for food and found a family making offering to the deceased. When they went off to have their rest, the hungry dog ate one of the chickens and then fed her puppies with her milk. The people came back and found that the chicken was missing. Angry, they made another offering and waited there. When they saw the female dog taking the chicken, they killed it. Without the female dog the 7 puppies all also died. The karmic fruition caused the family to be in trouble. The children died one by one until the final one. He went to enquire desperately why this happened to his family. The wise one told him that out of anger, hatred and delusion, he killed that one dog which caused all the 7 puppies to perish from hunger. To reverse the karmic effect, he has to gather all the bones of the dead dogs and do some prayer otherwise his youngest son also will die. He did as told and everything went on well after that. The message here is **not to toy with karma**. That is why during war, when people are killed, the **karmic can be very severe**.

(Above draft outline short notes was prepared by Angelica Chong Phey Yuen)