

Brother Teoh Thursday Talk 6th December 2018 Short Notes

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-181206.mp3>

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1. The main purpose of the Buddha's teaching is to **help living beings overcome** their **life problems** and be **free** from **all suffering**. Especially **mental suffering of fear, lamentations, sorrow**, as well as **confronting** the **realities** of **birth old age, sickness** and **death** as experience in life. Our physical body goes the way of nature. When you don't understand this law of nature, you will have **wrong view, attaching** to the body thereby **worrying** about this body of our **getting old, sick** and **die**. You need to apply the dhamma (the 5 daily contemplations) to overcome this **wrong thoughts** and when you understand it, there is **less suffering** and your **mental states** are more **calm** and **peaceful**. Then when you have progressed along the path of dhamma the **7 enlightenment factors** will keep on arising. You are **mindful, heedful** and **peaceful**, your actions, speeches and thoughts are **in accordance** with the **right views** borne of **wisdom**. You will have **yonisomanasikara** (wise attention) at the moment of sense experiences. You are then able to **communicate** and **act appropriately** and **beautifully** with people through the **3 ways** of **right conduct** after having **diligently cultivated the 4 right efforts to purify the mind**. With the **daily mindfulness cultivated** you will have **sense restraint**, leading to the **3 ways of good conduct** to **cultivate the 4 foundations of mindfulness** within life itself. With **sati sampajana** stabilized, you will have **clarity of mind** to develop the understanding and wisdom. Thus you will awaken and transform.
2. The **3 important qualities** of mind for **progress** in cultivation and meditation are: **Faith, sincerity** and **diligence**.
 - **Faith (Saddha)** in the **Buddha** and **his teaching** via **knowing clearly who He is** and **how unique** and **special** a **being the Buddha is** and **how great his teaching** is.
 - **Sincerity** – means you **don't waiver** to develop the **understanding** of the **essential dhamma** especially the **5 spiritual faculties** and the **3 phases of dhamma** (Pariyatti, Patipatti and Pativedha) to awaken.
 - **Diligence** – means to **persevere diligently** and **sincerely**.
3. **Faith** will drive you. With **sincerity**, you **won't deviate** into fame, psychic powers etc. because of your right view/understanding that **only wisdom frees and liberates our mind – nothing else**. You will **cultivate diligently**, the **3 turnings** of the **4 Noble Truth** leading to the **awakening/enlightenment**.
4. With the above **3 qualities of mind** you can then use the **Avijja sutta** to **further check** on **your progress** along the path of dhamma. **Avijja sutta** highlighted **10 important steps** leading to **enlightenment** in the here and the now. As kalyanamittas, most of you would **have completed** the first **4 steps** of:
 - Having **associated** with **noble friends** and **dhamma friends**.

- With dhamma friends, you will **have the conditions to constantly listen to the true dhamma to straighten your view and develop the faith.**
 - You will then have **Faith** in the Triple Gem.
 - **With faith** comes the development of the **initial wisdom (yonisomanasikara)** via **having cultivated the 1st and 2nd turning wisdom of suttamaya panna and cintamaya panna.**
5. With **yonisomanasikara, mental hindrance** won't arise, mind **won't stir**. You are calmer, and will have the **stability of mindfulness to see things as they are**. You are **diligent** in cultivating **sati sampajana (ever mindful and constantly meditative)**. When **mindfulness and clear comprehension has stabilized**, it further leads to **sense restraint**. Sense restraint **enables** you to develop the **3 ways of right conduct**. By then you would have realize at least Sotapanaship.
 6. As you move on practice, you can **cultivate the satipatthana (or the 4 foundations of mindfulness) with relative ease** because of your **stability of daily mindfulness** already developed. You will find that the teaching is easy to understand and those **Enlightenment factors** keep arising. Sati (**1st enlightenment factor**) is always there. You then use it to **investigate dhamma** (dhammavicaya, the **2nd enlightenment factor**). You are able to **reflect and contemplate constantly** to develop **understanding to straighten your view**. When you **realize** that the **dhamma always stands up to investigation**, your **faith is deeply strengthened** and this will conditions **viriya, the spiritual zeal (the 3rd enlightenment factor)** to arise. You will then **cultivate diligently** to experience **piti (spiritual joy, the 4th enlightenment factor)**. As you relax into it, your mind becomes **calmer and more refined**, you will then experience **sukham (spiritual blissfulness of mind)**. If you **continue to relax** into it, the mind becomes **more tranquil** leading to the realization of the **silent mind (passadhi, the 5th enlightenment factor)**. When you realize the **silent mind (which is also your true mind)**, you will come to know clearly, who you are and what you are. You are home. There is wisdom. When **passadhi is stabilized**, the mind becomes **collected and unwavering** leading to **Samadhi (the 6th enlightenment factor)**. Mind can then **see things as they are** and your **memory, conditioning etc. won't interfere**. One can then **insight** into phenomena to **realize the 3 universal characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self**. This awakening and wisdom bring about the **final (7th) enlightenment factor of Upekkha (equanimity borne of wisdom)** whereby the mind becomes peaceful and equanimous because it understands. You will **not react or become emotional** anymore. Nothing affects you anymore. There is **no more suffering**. You are free. You can **confront the 8 realities** of life easily. Life is simple. You will come to understand that finally there is – **'hey no you, hey no me', only mighty nature rolling by**.
 7. One will see the **power of wrong thought to divide via words, concepts and mundane conventions** leading to **dualities and conflict**. **Division** will lead to **chaos** because one **lack wisdom to bring about harmony**. You will see **these wrong thoughts clearly**. The beauty of dhamma is, it can lead one to arise the right thoughts, speeches and actions, right livelihood, etc. borne of right views. One is able **to apply dhamma in life** via following the **noble eightfold path to resolve** all problems and issues **amicably**. Dhamma can **liberate one's mind**, bringing about

awakening in the here and the now. One is **transformed** from a **heedless** being to an **enlightened being (an ariya)** who is **wise** and **very noble** in all aspects of life, **always heedful** and **mindful**. One also has the **embodiments** of all the **noble 8-fold path factors**.

8. All ariyas have **good conduct, upright conduct, wise and dutiful conduct**. They **do their duty well**. They know form and mind is not real, but is subject to karma. Thus one **can't simply** do things **inappropriately** while living **life** so having **right duties** to **avoid** all karmic negativity is very important for the **Law of karma recognizes relationship** and **there is such thing as life, loved ones, right thoughts, speeches and actions etc.** in life.
9. **Within the mundane world, law of karma exists. Life itself has its own reality.** But in **true emptiness**, the **realization is different** because it is the **unconditioned wisdom**. As stated in the Heart Sutra, in **true emptiness** there is **no** old age, **no** sickness and **no** death. Within ultimate reality or in true emptiness, there is 'hey no you hey no me'. No one is born, no one sick, no one old and no one dies. There is also **no** 4 noble truth: no suffering, no cause of suffering, no cessation and no path leading to cessation of suffering. When one **realize** these **profound truth** of the **conditioned** and the **unconditioned** one **will awaken** and one will **know how to live the noble life** of an ariya **beautifully**. With this **understanding**, you **won't attach** and **cling deludedly** to the **conditioned world** and the **phenomenal world of consciousness**. In the **Diamond Sutta**, the Buddha said, "**everything is conditioned dhamma**. And all conditioned dhamma are **not real, impermanent, and lead to suffering, empty and non-self**. They are **dreamlike, illusory, like bubble** (arising and gone) and **shadows**". Feeling is like bubble, arise and pass away very fast.
10. It is one's mind through **ignorance which clings** and **develops sorrow** leading to **suffering**.
11. You can have faith and confidence in the Buddha and his teaching through **understanding clearly** who Buddha is? He is **not only enlightened** but He is the **fully enlightened** one. To have such a **wise and great teacher** to be your **guide**, you will have great **gratitude** and **deep respect** for him and you will also **deeply cherish** his teaching because **his teaching** is so **unique** for it can **brings about liberation** from **all suffering** and **delusions**. Money cannot buy such understanding. Humanity needs this. Without **comprehending** this teaching, you will suffer in life. But with **dhamma, everything** becomes **simple and clear**. You are able to live life well. You will know the **importance** of following the advice of the Buddha, in regards to the **law of karma** to live the good life.
12. Faith leads to **balas** which is the **unshakable faith**. With **sincerity**, you **won't go astray** and become **gullible** in your **search for truth. Nothings frees except wisdom**. Thus your **sole purpose** in cultivation is to develop **wisdom**. Without wisdom, Psychic powers only entangles you more. Through **faith, sincerity** and **diligence** in cultivation, the **way will be there** and you will definitely **progress along the path of dhamma**.
13. It is **important to have kalyanamitta (dhamma friends)** to **help strengthen** our **bond** and **dhamma understanding** via **learning to counsel, motivate, encourage** and **help each** other to develop the fellowship **faith, sincerity** and **diligence** to **cultivate the dhamma**. This brings about wholesomeness. It can also arise the causes and conditions, so that in future, there will be kalyanamittas who will motivate and help you to walk this path in return. They will

share all their understanding with you just like what you did unto them now. We should count our **good blessing** and have **gratitude** for our ability to be part of the big kalyanamitta family.

14. **Having true dhamma/noble friends, is an important prerequisite** for enlightenment. **Remind yourself to constantly listen** to the **true dhamma** to develop the **1st turning wisdom** of **suttamaya panna**. Then contemplate **diligently** to develop the **2nd turning wisdom** of **cintamaya panna** to **straighten your view** and develop the **initial wisdom** to **stabilize your faith** in the triple gem. You will then be able to cultivate the rest of the cultivation following the **avijja sutta** steps leading to the enlightenment in the here and the now.
15. There are **10 important steps** stated in the **avijja sutta**. As kalyanamittas, you would have completed at least the **initial 4 steps** via having kalyanamitta (noble friends) as the first step. The **5th step** is to **cultivate the daily mindfulness**. The **6th step** is **sense restraint** developed via cultivating the 4 right efforts. The **7th step** is to arise the **3 ways of right conduct**. The **8th step** is cultivating the **4 foundations of mindfulness**. The **9th step** is when the **7 factors of enlightenment** keep arising. The **10th step** is **knowledge and vision, leading to enlightenment** in the here and the now. In this era with the Buddha sasana still around, it is quite easy to realize such truth.
16. Meditation reporting – A sister asked regarding the meaning of sati being defined as ‘**awareness before the knowing**’. She realizes in daily activities, she only is aware after something happens. Brother Teoh answered that it is good for her to ask - for him to know where she is at with her practice. He further explained what Sati means. Awareness before the knowing mean **awareness before perceiving something**. For example, just be **aware of your hand movement**. It is **not** the **concept** of **perceiving what the thing is**. But just aware. **Mind and movement move as one**. For example, **body and mind as one while bowing**. The moment you are **without** thought, you are already aware because you are not perceiving. **The 4 supports for awareness based meditation is: relax, aware, 24 hours and trust**.
17. Relax body and mind and let things be. **Awareness is mindfulness, being silent** because **without thought** you already **aware**. **Whatever heedless thinking, let it arise, don't fight, control or suppress it, just let it be and it will slow down**. These are **habitual tendencies** arising due to your **lack of mindfulness**. When **mental hindrances arise**, they **hinder** mind from **becoming aware**. But if you **just let it be**, and **don't give it meaning**, it **will die down** and you will **experience** the **tranquility** or **stillness** of mind after that. Bow until body and mind as one. **Do until mindfulness comes**. Then the **form and mind will know what sati is, when it has arisen**. There is **no thought** involved so **don't try to know** for **thought based mediation is doomed to fail**. Sati is there when everything you do, you are aware. **Mind sweeping method** in combination with **metta** can also help one to **decondition** the **heedless thinking**.
18. Train via anapanasati until the **awareness** stabilized, and **breathing** has become **so subtle** until the **silent mind arise**. **Mind then enters sati**. After coming out of meditation, you will come to realize that your mind (**awareness**) and **all your physical movements, they move as one**. Your **mundane mind** needs to be trained. The **5 spiritual faculties are vital**. **Just do and don't try to know, until sati arise**.

19. When you live life, you have to perceive and interact with others. **Mindfulness** must **come naturally**. Thus you train **during formal meditation** or **while at home when you are alone**, when **your senses** are **not so active**. You need to **develop awareness of all actions and movements in daily life**. Maintain awareness at the heart area, **aware of outside from inside**. This is your **new way** of living life – **heedful living**. You can't think when you are aware. When you cultivate - just do (walk, standing, sitting and lying down etc. aware), you do until the sati comes. **Not until your mind has entered sati, you can't do daily mindfulness. When sati is there**, whether walking, bending, stretching, etc. **you are always aware**. Sati becomes **very natural** for it has become a part of you already. You then use it in living. Then only your sati sampajana (or mindfulness and clear comprehension) practices can come to be. There must be a **sincerity of purpose** - that is you are not doing this to develop fame or psychic ability, but to **train the mind, to develop wisdom** only. This is **daily mindfulness** and it can see a lot of things thereby arising the **self-knowledge** or **initial wisdom** needed to awaken. You can see how you (the form and mind) function as a human being. How you become emotional, fearful, sad etc. How your **wrong views** and **opinions** condition you **to react to sense experiences** to arise the **duality of likes and dislikes** which are your mental hindrances of sensual desire and ill-will. You can see them in real life. You know how you become afflicted, when things don't go your way. How when your thoughts project, fear, worry and anxiety arise to makes you miserable/suffer. You will come to know that **thoughts are respond to memories**. Hence **acting according to memory is not acting at all!** Instead you **should act** with **wisdom** and **understanding (right view)**. Right view with regards to the **law of karma (karma niyama)** and **law of mind (citta niyama)**. **We are what we are because of our karma. So karma is very important**. Thus you need to understand **what constitutes** good and wholesome karma. The **3 ways right conduct** are vital. Buddha advices us to **contemplate this law of karma** via his **5 daily contemplations**. **To take care of karma** we must follow the **advice of Buddha** to avoid all evil, cultivate goodness and purify our mind to arise a beautiful **karmic nature**. To **avoid evil** it is vital for us to keep the 5 precepts, deeply reflecting on each precepts to **understand clear** why we must **keep our precepts well**.
20. Why do you take the precept to abstain from killing? It is because those who kill are evil people with the 3 evil roots. If you break this precept, it constitutes **evil karma**. **Precepts** is **to protect** you so that you will not be **miserable or afflicted** by these **potential evil karmic fruition**. Do good begets good, do evil begets evil. You reap what you sow. Thus you need to be mindful to cultivate wholesomeness instead. **Virtuous** thoughts, actions, and speech bring about **goodness**. When you are **sincere, kind, generous** and **caring** towards others, others will respond the same to you. For parents, if you **sacrifice** for your kids and **do your duties well**, in future, you will have parents who will **provide, sacrifice** and **care** for you. This is karma. Thus it is important to do your duty. For children, if you care for your parents, in future, you will have kids who will take care of you.
21. Thus be **determined to follow the advice of the Buddha**. Make **vows** for causes and conditions, that life after life when you come, you will have these **right views** and **understanding**. You can follow the **Bodhisattva vows** as given by Brother Teoh in his blue transcript book – 'Cultivating the Bodhisattva way'. You are supposed to renew your

vows daily, then later once a week, then once a month, and finally repeatedly once over 3 to 6 months. If you do this with **understanding sincerely** and **invoke power of merits** for **causes and conditions** for it to arise, then even when there is no Buddha sasana, you will still have these right views and understanding when you come, either by choice or by karmic.

22. When **daily mindfulness** is there, you will have **clarity of mind to perceive, to be aware and move**. There is no more fear and anxiety. You only perceive when needed. There is **no need** to worry about your problems because no amount of **worry can help you solve your problem (won't help)**. Also **when you worry**, you are **not aware**, you are **preoccupied** with **those thoughts** or **lost in thought**. For example when you are driving and thinking, in those moments of heedlessness, you could end up in an accident. Thus you need to **discipline yourself** especially when driving. It is **not wise** to get addicted to phone messages or calls which is dangerous. If you have to please stop at the road side to answer **urgent calls** or wait until you are home to do so. To be on the safe side, don't use phone whilst driving unless it is hands free.
23. It is important to **listen attentively**, then **reflect to develop** the **understanding**. **Determined** to be constantly **mindful**. Brother Teoh advised us to cultivate **daily mindfulness**. The moment **you know you are lost in thought**, you **should anchor your awareness** back to the **movements (physical, mental and nature's)** in daily life. For example, when you observe people, your awareness and their activities are as one (specific phenomena awareness). Like the moving car, your awareness and the car move as one.
24. You need to be **tested** in real life – your **relationship** with **nature, society** and **fellow human beings**. You need to **interact** with them. **While living life**, if you are **aware** you **can see clearly** your **own delusion, selfishness, emotions** etc. You also **understand** how your **mind stir** because of your **wrong views** and **self-delusion**. When you have this **understanding**, your mind **need not** stir or react to sense experience like before. The mind reacts and stirs because of your **like and dislike** or **mental hindrances** of sensual desire and ill will. Without these wrong thoughts, you won't have mental hindrances. Instead **with mindfulness**, you can **live your life heedfully**. No more panicking nor reacting. You are **peaceful within, always aware** with **little or no thought** when you have developed the **initial wisdom** through **listening** and **reflecting** on the dhamma. You will have the **right view** to 'accept people as they are' and 'the world as the world'. You will **smile more**, have **gratitude** towards all things. You will be **more sensitive, sincere, kind, contented** and **appreciative** of life. There will **no more conflict**.
25. If you are **contented**, there is **no more desire** or **craving**. Your mind **won't always want things** your way because you are **contented** with **the way things are** and your **karmic nature** in life. Without wisdom, the ego always wants to become something better leading to cravings via your strong and deluded views.
26. **Contentment** is your **greatest wealth**. A rich person **not contented** is **poor** because he **still wants** (has cravings). Brother Teoh shared about him retiring early via having **contentment** - with enough savings **to live a simple, yet decent** and **relatively comfortable life**. He does not need much to sustain himself and his family after having paid his mortgages. Brother Teoh retired in May 2001, after his eldest daughter graduated; when he did not have any

more burden. He is **contented** with what he has and spends time **do things he likes to do**. Life is simple. Later he came to realize after his retirement is, he makes more money after retiring as compared to when he was working. He did it through investment. With wisdom, one will also **know how to grow one's money through proper investment understanding**.

(Above draft is prepared by Sister Phey Yeun)