

Brother Teoh's Thursday class dated 20th December 2018 outline short Notes

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-181220.mp3>

Whiteboard Note : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-181220.jpg>

1. Sister Angie concluded that developing **wisdom** is **most** important in cultivation. **Wisdom** can enable us to have the **right views** to **cultivate appropriately** leading to **good decision** making to **live** the **noble life**.
2. Brother Teoh confirmed that the whole of dhamma cultivation is centered on developing **wisdom** for nothing **frees** your **mind** except **wisdom (panna)**.
3. Sila, Samadhi and Panna is basically the **Noble eightfold path**. Sila is morality or precepts. Sila/Precept is the **source of spiritual joy, spiritual wealth** and **spiritual peacefulness of mind**. Without Sila, Samadhi cannot kick in. Samadhi is the **meditative discipline**. **Panna is wisdom**. **Without wisdom**, you are **heedless** and end up being entangled in life, leading to suffering. Human beings tend to accumulate more knowledge instead of wisdom, thinking that through cunningness and intellect, you can become successful. It is definitely not the case. In fact Knowledge which is rigid binds and it does not free you. If you cling onto knowledge, it makes you think you are smart and clever. However you are **not wise** for you do not understand life, end up getting into trouble. A PhD holder or a noble prize winner's life without dhamma (the spiritual understanding) can still be miserable.
4. With right view born of wisdom, you will be able to live your life well. You know how to navigate around not getting into trouble. Wisdom is about understanding nature's truth as taught by the Buddha. Nature's truth are: the **5 universal orders** of nature that govern life and existence. If you abide by these nature's law, you will know how to live life well. Utu niyama and bija niyama are the first 2 **scientific laws** of nature – scientists know these laws, and thus flourish based on these understanding. The other three are **Spiritual laws** (karma niyama, citta niyama and dhamma niyama) – the Buddha is an expert in such spiritual laws. Reason why the Buddha has such great wisdom.
5. Buddha saw the law of karma clearly. We are all born and heir of our karma. Thus it is vital for us to take care of our karma for we reap what we sow. Do good begets good. Do evil begets evil. We must live in accordance with this law. Or else we get into trouble. We must always do our duty well. What we do onto others, parents, friends, kids, fellow beings, - we reap what we sow. If we are respectful, grateful and help them, the law of karma will reward us accordingly via its appropriate fruition where we are cared for and respected in return. It is vital to follow advice of the Buddha to avoid all evil and do good. Thus Sila is very important.
6. Dana parami (generosity) is also very important because it creates good condition for us to cultivate dhamma. Without it, you are born poor. You have to work hard for money (food and shelter) hence no time for meditation because the basic need of life which is food and Shelter is more important. But with dana parami, you have the luxury of conditions and time to listen to dhamma and meditate to transform yourself and bring about a good life. If you don't take care of karma, your life won't change. All these understandings come from wisdom.
7. Reason why the Buddha later taught Dana, Sila and Bhavana (Samadhi + Panna). When you can see things as they are and see the truth of impermanence, suffering state and non self, you will awaken and develop wisdom. Wisdom is right view in regards to the law of karma, law of mind and law of

truth. You need to have sincerity of purpose, so that when you meditate, you don't deviate but stay on the right path. If you go into psychic field, without wisdom, you will get into trouble. If you use it for own selfish purpose it will lead to karmic consequences. Without a proper teacher, mara will attack you and create more problems for you.

8. Instead, develop **virtues, kindness** and **good karmic nature** (with **understanding**) to support you all the way in your cultivation. **Dana parami** performed through merits making like materialistic giving, generosity (by offering flowers or incense or fruits, etc. to the altar and during puja), keeping precepts, meditating, listening to dhama, straightening view, rejoicing, sharing and transferring of merits, helping out in community service via contributing towards the growth of the sasana and the gift of truth are all meritorious actions. These **10 meritorious actions** you can get to perform them when you attend any of our dhamma classes and activities.
9. Instead of **living life heedlessly** and being **deluded, wasting time** in materialistic and sensuality **indulgence** of life, you should always be **heedful** and **wise** to live a balance life. If you have the **means** via your dana parami, it is alright to 'pamper' yourself to some extent but need to be mindful and heedful always. If you have the means and condition, you can make use of your dana parami to have the good life. You can provide for yourself, your loved ones and also donate to help others. It is important to open up your rather **loving** and **compassionate heart** and be **kind** and **generous** to others.
10. The 10 paramitas (or perfections) to realize Samasambuddhahood: – as you walk the path and develop understanding of the **Bodhisattva way**, the **10 perfections** can be developed **naturally** via understanding. The first **most important step** is to **plant the seed of bodhi** (the Bodhi mind) with **great faith and sincerity**. Then develop it further through the **5 stages of Bodhi mind** development. The 1st stage is to **plant the seed of Bodhi to walk this way** via **taking the 4 basic vows of a Bodhisattva**. Bodhi seed will **mature** through **faith** and **determination**. Vow with **love and compassion** to **liberate all beings from suffering**. Vow to **endure** and **sever all sufferings** to develop the **wisdom to know how to free your mind**, only then can you take others across. Vow to **penetrate and perfect all wisdom**. And finally vow to **complete the 10 perfections**. (All these are explained in Brother Teoh's blue transcript book – 'Cultivating the Bodhisattva way').
11. To **renounce** all things: materialistic wealth, views, opinions etc. meaning no attachments, cravings & delusions. Renounce to enter monkhood to cultivate dhamma is just physical renunciation. As for mental renunciation meaning to be meditative and to realize your true nature. Mind in seclusion. With wisdom, form and mind become beautiful. User of form and mind become a blessing to all, leading to the noble life (wisdom renunciation).
12. As you go through sainthood way, you can become an Arahant then you cease. But with the bodhisattva way, you can choose to come back through the Bodhisattva vows.
13. When you cultivate continuously with faith sincerely, the **Bodhi mind** will continues to grow and progress leading to the **realization** of the **2nd stage** of Bodhi mind development (**Bodhi mind that subdue all afflictions**). When you enter the **3rd stage**, you are already so beautiful because by then you would have definitely gone beyond the sainthood way (or the Arahant stage) already. You realize your **true mind** and get to **connect** to your **true nature (Bodhi mind that illuminates your true nature)**. The **4th stage** of Bodhi mind development is even more beautiful (**Bodhi mind that renounces samsara**), you **don't have to worry** about **how long** the **journey** takes because you know **samsara is not real**. You **have gone beyond** the **normal cultivation** and reached the **stage** of

cultivation of **no thought, no mark** and **no dwelling** as taught by the **diamond sutra** and the **6th Patriarch, Master Hui Neng** (via his 6th Patriarch's Platform sutra teaching).

14. When you cultivate at this **4th stage**, your **perfection** of the 10 parami will happen by **itself naturally** and with ease. The **1st vow** to liberate all sentient beings will help you to develop **love** and **compassion** and the **2nd vow** will help you develop the perfection of **renunciation**. The **3rd vow** develops **wisdom**. **Precepts** (Sila), **Patience endurance** (Khanti) and **generosity** (dana) paramis are all part and parcel of the meditative way (Dana, Sila and Bhavana) of cultivation which comes naturally. The balance of paramis of viriya, sacca, Adhiṭṭhāna and Upekkhā are also part and parcel of the **meditative way** once we have understood the cultivation via right view.
15. Sister Tammy shared her experience of her chanting Buddhānāṃ Gāthā... Etc. while in Burma. She pondered its meaning. When she was young, she felt protected by her parents but later she came to know even they are subject to karma so they can't really protect her. Instead the **real protection** is via taking **refuge** in the Triple Gem (**Buddha, Dhamma** and **Sangha**) where the **real teaching** of the **Buddha** can be found. With the realization of this teaching one **can transcend birth and death**.
16. Brother Teoh further explained that only **refuge safe** is **true protection**. Taking refuge means seeking protection somewhere like a refugee seeking refuge in a foreign country. Parent's protection is **not real** refuge because they themselves are also subject to birth and death, but with **refuge** in the **Buddha, Dhamma** and **Sangha**, the **wisdom** that you **can have** will lead to **virtue** and **understanding** which **truly protects**. Thus **cultivating goodness (virtues)** and **avoiding evil** gives the highest protection according to Buddha. With virtue and wisdom, you are **incapable of harming others**, you are **kind, considerate** and you have **metta (love)** and **compassion**. This **parami protects** you. With wisdom, you will follow advice of the Buddha to avoid all evil (bad karma) which lead to misery and instead cultivate goodness via cultivating Sila, Samadhi and Panna (Noble 8-fold path).
17. All the teachings are inter connected **cumulating into wisdom**. Wisdom comes from understanding the dhamma. According to the dhammapada, there is **no refuge** safe, not even in the mountains or temples, the only refuge safe is in the triple gem, where you can find the **4 noble truths** (which is the **essence** of the Buddha's teaching). Taking refuge is also to cultivate **affinity** with triple gem, whereby life after life when you come and there are conditions, you will meet up with the Buddha, his enlightened disciples and his teachings. Even without the sasana, you will have the conditions to meet up with them if they are around. You will still connect. When you take the Bodhisattva vows, you will be able to come regardless of the existence has sasana or not. You have nothing to lose but everything to gain when you take the Bodhisattva vows. With faith and sincerity, these vows will take you along the path of dhamma and becomes a true gem to serve you well.
18. It was in 1971 when Brother Teoh started his **probe** into the **mystery of life**. He loved looking at the night sky. His mind was **contemplative** knowing that he was just like a speck of dust in this planet. The universe is so immense and there is basically no boundary in this universe. Being **so insignificant** he inquired: who am I? What am I? Why am I here? His inner voice told him **to meditate to understand** although at that time he did not know what **dhamma** and **meditation** is as yet. But because of his past cultivation he knew as a kid, he was not normal as others. Almost everything he did was like opposite of the popular convention of society. He looked at things differently. That was why he could understand truth very fast. When he inherited his past cultivation's understanding later, his nature came to know that, truth is always the opposite of the world's popularly accepted convention. All that is enticing in this world do not last. For everything is impermanent, goes the way of nature, ends up in suffering, because without wisdom you will cling. All is merely an illusion (a

world of consciousness) which come and go, arise and pass away. Your deluded mind perceives, attach, clings and creates misery. But with dhamma, all these cease to delude and deceive you.

19. Sister Padmasuri talked about her daughter abroad who misses them (parents) and still cry. As an undergraduate who is emotional it is normal to cry. All this is part and parcel of life. How to deal with such life situation? Bro Teoh shared that we need to understand, what is emotion? Emotion pertains to mental feeling which develops into good and bad emotion according to our views. All the good memories with parents are accumulated. When you are alone abroad, when you recall those good memories you will miss them. It is natural for human beings without wisdom to be emotional. But with dhamma, you understand that these are just emotions borne of memory (thoughts) and the Buddha's advice is **not to attach**. When there is condition you can be with them, without condition you accept it. When parents are not around, you can develop positive reflection like, I can be independent to survive alone when parents are not around. This is good training. Technology is beautiful and helpful, we can use it (social media) to contact one another even though far away.
20. The wise verses the intellectual with scholarly knowledge. The latter needs to put into practice what they have learned (knowledge). With the right teacher, you can reflect and investigate into truth. When you realize that they stand up to investigation **your faith** and **spiritual zeal** will be strengthened. You will be more diligent in your practice to become a better person. This is the real change. The real dhamma will arise when you are **mindful**. With dhamma, you **are different** from those with **mere knowledge**. You **will see clearly with awareness**, the **3 evil roots** as they arise, your **own selfishness, greed, delusion etc.** and you are determined to change via following the advice of the Buddha **to abandon** those **wrong views** and **bad habits** borne of **heedless** living. You will develop right speech, actions, and thoughts and cultivate virtues. You are incapable of negativity, you will keep to your precepts via heedful living. You will do your duty well, and you can count your good blessings, as with dhamma, you **can love** and **care** not only for yourself, but others as well. If you have the means, you can pamper yourself and your loved ones. But don't crave to indulge when there are no more conditions to have them. **Enjoy** and live the **good life** when you **have the means** and **conditions** to have them.

(Above draft is prepared by Sis Phey Yuen)