

Outline short notes for Bro Teoh's 21 Feb 2019 Thursday class

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190221.mp3>

1. The 3 main key points of Brother's Teoh's Talk on the 21 Feb 2019 are:-
 - The importance of developing **awareness** (sati) leading to **heedfulness**
 - The **5 mental hindrances** arise due to **lack** of the **opposite 5 spiritual** faculties
 - **Yoniso Manasikāra** (**Wise Attention** at the moment of sense experience) - Initial Wisdom must be developed following the 10 cultivation steps as stated in the Avijja sutta.
2. Sister Angie reported that since she starts practising meditation she is beginning to be **more aware** of her breathing. Brother Teoh explained that this is good progress because majority of the people are hardly **aware** while living life. They are **conscious** of life and are **heedlessly** lost in thoughts **most of the time**.

The difference between **awareness** and **consciousness** is, awareness only takes place when there is **an inner awareness** which is independent of thought. One **can only be aware** when one is **silent within**. You may be **conscious** of life but that **does not mean** you are **aware**. To **live life** we need a **conscious mind**. Sometimes our mind moves so fast, so to be **aware** of what is going on in life we need to be **completely silent**. Awareness is different from the thought. Therefore, if we can develop inner silent we would be more aware of things around us. We need to train and stabilize our mind to be **ever mindful**, until our **mind enters sati**. Then the mundane mind **stops** and there is **no more thinking**. Then we will have **clarity to see things as they are** leading to **wisdom**. Then your mind will be **less reactive** and has **less stirring**. If this stirring is **so rampant** it becomes habitual **without** you being aware and these habitual tendencies will make you heedless. Most of people are like that as they lack the 5 spiritual faculties. It is difficult to be aware when the mental hindrances are around.

3. The 5 mental hindrances are:
 - i. Sensual desire – like and dislikes, pleasant and unpleasant reactions of mind
 - ii. Ill will – resentment, hatred, envy, jealousy and bitterness
 - iii. Sloth and torpor – drowsy, lethargic and sleepy mind. This mind lack viriya.
 - iv. Restlessness of mind. Why is the mind restless? Because of fear, worry and anxiety
 - v. Doubt – uncertainties and insecure. The mind lack faith and becomes heedless.

A good way to train the mind is via meditation. Meditation will help improve our awareness. Relax and silent your mind. **Do not try to be aware** as that is the thought wanting to be aware. When thought is active there can be no awareness. Just silent and be aware. Relax and stabilize the silent mind and use it to cultivate the Noble eighth fold path leading to **heedfulness**. Appamada/Heedfulness means **ever mindful** and **constantly meditative** (to cultivate the Noble Eightfold path). Dhammapada verse 21 states that **heedfulness** is the **path** to the **deathless**, the **heedful never dies**, whereas **heedlessness** is the **path** to the **dead**, the **heedless are as if dead**. If you are heedful you are destined for enlightenment. Dhammapada verse 23 defines what heedfulness is: 'The **constantly meditative, ever mindful** and steadfast one will realize the supreme enlightenment of Nibbana'.

4. Most people have **knowledge** but **not wisdom**. They get this **dhamma knowledge** through listening, reading and committing them to memory instead of doing the **contemplation** and **reflection** on the dhamma to develop the wisdom. They do not understand the rationale behind the three turnings teaching. This way of learning would not lead to wisdom. It is just knowledge & theory – not wisdom. To gain wisdom, practitioner needs to listen attentively with understanding and enquire, contemplate and reflect on the dhamma such as why did Buddha say this? And how can I understand it?

In the 1st noble truth, we can enquire, why did Buddha says that birth is suffering? Reflect and contemplate on the birth process and find out - were there any suffering.

5. The past impact us greatly. With past cultivation the understanding is easier and faster. If you cultivate the 10 stages or ground of Bodhisattva training and reach the **8th ground** then one will not fall back anymore. But to hit that level there is a need to cultivate till the **3rd stage of Bodhi mind** development – **Bodhi mind** that **illuminates your true nature**. All these are possible if you have developed the understanding of the cultivation in the past. Otherwise every life you come without the strong karmic and spiritual natures – you practically need to start from basic again and it is no going to be easy. In one life time you may not have sufficient time to cultivate much. Not until you hit such very favourable condition such as this **present sasana** of Sakyamuni Buddha to cultivate the **true dhamma**. Rare indeed is to have the privilege to encounter the Buddha dhamm/sasana and be born as a human being.

6. To start on this journey one may need to first plant the **seed of Bodhi** with **great sincerity, faith** and **understanding** to walk this Bodhisattva path via taking the **four basic vows of a Bodhisattva**. To refer to our standard format for the taking of the Bodhisattva vows for full details.

Prepared by: Sister Tan Keat Hoon