

Short Notes for Brother Teoh's Thursday Talk 26 September 2019

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190926.mp3>

Whiteboard : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190926-150x150.jpg>

Youtube : [Understanding Dharma Cultivation and Meditation](https://youtu.be/BRbTV46Qatk) <https://youtu.be/BRbTV46Qatk>

1. **The Awareness** nature is **suchness** (it is just a **nature within**) and there is **nobody** to be aware. This *nature within* is **not** a being and **it cannot come out and live life**. The moment one starts to **perceive** from this awareness nature, the **mundane mind arises** because **perception** is an **aggregate** of the **mundane mind**. But with 1st and 2nd turning **initial wisdom** (*yonisomanasikara*) borne of **constant listening and contemplative reflection** of the dharma, it will prompt you to have the **requisite wisdom** at the **moment of sense experience** to **act wisely**. Thus **preventing your mind from stirring and reacting via delusion**. *Things are as they are*, due to their conditions behind their arising. Therefore **you can accept** the **reality** of the **moment**. Whatever that arise within this **existential world** there are causes and conditions behind. So *when you want things your way* which is *against nature's law*, *you suffer*. This is in line with the 1st noble truth reality of 'not getting what you want' is dukkha.
2. You must understand the **nature's laws** that *governs life and existence* especially the **law of karma**. Venerable Assaji told Sariputta (who then became a sotapanna) that his teacher said, *'whatever that arise, there are causes and conditions behind, and these causes and conditions have been explained by my teacher* (the Buddha) through his *5 daily contemplations*: 1) This body is of the nature to grow old for it has not gone beyond old age; 2) This body is of the nature to get sick because it has not gone beyond sickness and diseases; 3) This body is of the nature to die for it has not gone beyond death, it is **not** a permanent unchanging entity, hence not you; 4) All that you own and hold on to dearly will one day separate from you; 5) ***We are all born of our karma, heir to our karma, conditioned and supported by our karma, we are what we are due to our karma.***
3. Law of karma – whenever happen in life the causes and conditions for their arising are **mainly due** to karma from the past. Thus you should **accept** the **reality of the moment** and **not stir** your **thought unnecessarily** so that there is **no fear** or **anxiety**, **no blaming** others and your **mind is quiet**, leading to **clarity** of mind. With this you **can resolve** the **problem amicably** via **following N&FP** and **move on** with your **life smoothly**.
4. Do what you need to do via wisdom. That is, need to **repent** and **seek for forgiveness** from all beings and Triple Gem, **do it** via reciting, *'whomsoever from the distant past until now, whether knowingly or unknowingly that this nature of mine has caused them any karmic negativity, misery, suffering or mislead, I would like to sincerely ask for forgiveness. May my sincere request for forgiveness, be accepted by all'*. I vow to **repent** via following the advice of the Buddha: *to avoid all evil, do good and purify my mind through cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path*. Radiate love and metta. With this, **karmic obstruction** can be overcome. Then **Vow not to repeat all these evil**, through **keeping the 5 precepts**. To **purify mind** one need to **constantly listen** to and **contemplate** the **dharma** and **cultivate sincerely** to **straighten one's views**. After that, **invoke power** of **merits** (develop via your wholesome acts, thoughts and speech) for **turn around** and for **other type of blessings** like, 'to always **avoid** the foolish/headless, **meet with** the wise and enlightened ones, until Nibbana is realized soonest possible.
5. You can also modify the above to suite your need. For example, 'by the power of whatever wholesomeness, that this nature of mine has cultivated **since I know the dharma**, may it arise **causes and conditions for me (or my**

loved one's) to **recover to good health** soonest possible. This is the **dharma way** that can help you improve your life and with this spiritual understanding you can also use it to help others as well.

6. With **understanding, cultivate the 5 spiritual faculties to develop** the meditation. With the **5 spiritual faculties developed**, the **mental hindrances** are gone so there is **no need** to train or anchor the mind using skillful means (or object of meditation) to make the mind **calm, peaceful and aware within**. Just **relax, maintain awareness**, and the **mind** will be **silent immediately**. When your **mind enters sati**, you are **very sensitive** and all *your seeing and hearing* etc. will be in sati. You are **able to see your bodily movements, nature's phenomena and mental flows**, all in sati, all in a continuous flow. Thus **no more heedless thinking** (lost in thought).
7. **Ignorance** will condition **wrong thoughts** (thoughts with the **evil roots**) to condition your fear, worry and anxiety. On the other hand when there is *yoniso manasikara* (wisdom at the moment of sense experience), you are aware and able to act according to wisdom.
8. The moment there is *avijja* (ignorance), thinking continues. For *the wise, they only use the thinking mind to contemplate, reflect and arise the right thoughts*. The mind is **aware** when **contemplating**. But for those with too much knowledge they tend to use a lot of their memory to act, and that is the reason why they cannot reflect or contemplate correctly. According to J. Krishnamurti, beware of the one who *says 'I know'* because there is nothing to know. All knowing borne of your **views, opinions and conditioned thoughts** are just knowledge.
9. **Dhamma is akaliko, beyond thought beyond mind**. Therefore **'whenever there is a meditator, there is no meditation'**. The meditator here is the egoic mind, the thought. Hence the thought cannot be in state of sati or awareness. Either you are aware or lost in thought. To meditate, you **must understand and use your true mind but to live life you must understand and use your mundane mind**.
10. Moment to moment, life passes by, what are you doing? Most people **are too busy thinking, planning and worrying about life**, not being in the moment, *silently aware to truly living life*. This is **heedless living**. But with the meditative mind, you are mindful, aware and silent within. This is **heedful living**. Brother Teoh shared that although he is **currently sharing dharma** in this class, but inside (his nature) is still and empty; his 'nature' shares naturally (straight from the heart that has the wisdom connected to it). *Once awoken, the wisdom is connected to the form and mind* hence making it different (wise). It is different from the one who uses memory and knowledge to act.
11. Silent mind is able to see the **birth and formation** of thought. **Stability of mindfulness** is needed. There is an **inner awareness** within. Observe **without** the observer (**objective** seeing), for the **'observer' is the observed!** – Here the *observer is the thought that perceives with an egoic mind (Subjective seeing)*. Thus the **objective** seeing is the **pure seeing** and the Buddha explained it using this words: *'in the seeing there is only the seeing consciousness, no one to see as yet'*. With this, one stays with the **true mind**, in **pure awareness, to see things as they are and to awoken without the need for words**. That is *to see things as they are before the perception and without the observer, this is wisdom seeing*. (*'The observer is the observed' stated above is a J. Krishnamurti's quote*).
12. Buddha merely shows the way. Unless you *cultivate yourself and awoken*, you cannot understand. You will be more confused if you use the mundane mind to understand.

13. There are **3 types of seeing** as taught in the **Mahayana teaching**: 1) **mundane seeing**: ‘see mountain as mountain’. 2) The **direct or wisdom seeing** via the *silent mind*, to see thing as it is, with the **pure awareness/perception (without the words)**: thus *See Mountain as not mountain* 3) **Suchness seeing** with **true wisdom**: ‘*Seeing Mountain as mountain again*’ – as one blends into life within the existential world of **convention**, one must have the **wisdom to accord and flow with conditions and go beyond duality (right and wrong)**.
14. In the Surangama sutta, it is said, ‘**perception of form is consciousness**, whereas its **non-perception is wisdom**’. When **no** mundane mind is involved, there is **direct seeing** via the *silent mind*, to see things as they are without words and concept borne of perception, and that is wisdom and understanding. But when you **perceive** form under *mundane seeing* (i.e. without the wisdom), the **mundane mind (with delusion) arises**, then one label what one see with **words and concept** and that is **knowledge** borne of **mundane consciousness**.
15. A **very stable daily mindfulness** (sati) is needed to see the birth and creation of thought. The pure vinnana (or pure awareness/perception) is the one that can allow one’s **nature** to see things as they are (seeing truth). With sati and initial wisdom, **at the moment** of sense experience (the pure consciousness before content input), feeling can **remains as pure feeling**. It does **not** lead to craving. This comes with understanding because the unwavering mind is borne of wisdom. But **as your mind stirs with likes and dislikes**, borne of **mental hindrances** conditioned by **self-delusion**, **this mental hindrances will** hinder your mind from entering the **meditative state** of inner peace and inner awareness.
16. The mandarin saying 心为根本 (xin wei ken pen), means you **have to start your cultivation** from **basic**, meaning start **from mind** (xin wei ken pen) and you must understand **what this mind** is all about (its 2 aspects) so that you **can understand clearly** who you are and what you are? If you **can’t even** understand that you have a **self-nature** and **everything arises** from that self-nature via **creation** by the **mundane mind** (which is dependent originating and condition arising) then you are **being superficial** in your cultivation and you are **wasting your time**. Whether wholesome, unwholesome, evil and non-evil, etc. they **all arise** from here, this is **basic understanding**.” This basic understanding of the **self-nature** and **the mundane mind** is also the reason why Sakyamuni Buddha, said “*Mind is the fore-runner of all things. Mind is chief, when mind arises everything arises.*” Hence Good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, etc. – they all arise via the **mundane mind’s creation**. And Bodhidharma said, ‘*if this basic teaching also you don’t understand, then how can you meditate?* Do you follow? This basic understanding teaches you, that your mind via words and thoughts creates duality of good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, etc. and that is why you have to start from there. Brother Teoh urges kalyanamitta to read the transcript **book, lesson 75 of his 6th Patriarch platform sutra**, page 13 onwards to develop the better understanding.
17. Question on **how to transcend duality** and the **middle path** is also clearly explained from Page 24 onward of the same book.
18. The zen story of Bodhidharma, states that all cultivation **starts from** understanding the **mundane mind** which creates everything is very important. It is similar to Sakyamuni’s Dhamapada sayings verses 1 and 2: ‘*Mind is the forerunner of all things, mind is chief, when mind arises, everything arise. When you are heedless, you will act with delusion thus causing suffering. But when you are heedful, your mind is beautiful and happiness will follow you like the shadow that never leaves you.*’ Since you hold the key to your own life destiny. To be happy or unhappy is **entirely your own choice**. Therefore it is **important** for you to **choose wisely**. People suffer due to their lack of understanding because they are **not taught** such dharma teaching.

19. Both **mundane and supra mundane aspects** of life are summarized in the 4 noble truths. With this understanding one will **understand the secret of life**, then one **can live life beautifully and meaningfully**. This 4 noble truths is so **complete** and **unique** that when Brother Teoh came to know this teaching when he was young (1971), he **never turned back** and **cultivated it all the way through**. The 4 noble truths are:

- **1st Noble truth:** concerning **mundane realities of life and existence**: There is this **noble truth** of dukkha explaining the **prevalence of suffering** and the **realities of life and existence**. All **mundane happenings** are **part** of by the **8 realities** of birth, old age, sickness and death, separation from loved ones & one's prized possessions, being with people you don't like, when things don't go your way, your expectation is life are not fulfilled, when you cannot get what you want and finally, 'in short it is due to your **self-delusion** which conditions you to **grasp and cling onto the 5 aggregate of form and mind, thinking that is you**, is the **cause of dukkha**.
- **2nd Noble Truth:** Cause of arising of suffering which is **craving** borne of **self-delusion**, conditioned by **ignorance**.
- **3rd Noble Truth:** **Enlightenment** in the here and now is **possible** and **suffering need not be** when you have the **wisdom**. (Supra mundane aspect).
- **4th Noble Truth:** How to **end suffering** through **cultivating** the **noble 8-fold path** to live the **noble life** of an **enlightened being**. This is the **supra mundane** aspect of life.

(The draft for this short notes were prepared by Sister Chong Phey Yuen.)