

Outline Short Notes of WPCS Sunday talk on 25th November 2018

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/5-Cultivating-the-Bodhisattva-Way-25-Nov-2018.mp3>

Whiteboard : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/5-Cultivating-the-Bodhisattva-Way-25-Nov-2018.jpg>

Reference book: Cultivating the Bodhisattva Way by Brother Teoh (page 32)

1. When someone asked Master Hsuan Hua whether an Arahant can be reborn again, he replied that unless the person asking the question is an Arahant, otherwise the question was unnecessary. According to the Mahayana tradition, an Arahant can still go the Bodhisattva way **if he understands how to do it via taking the 4 basic vows**.
2. Bro Teoh shared the emails written by a Singaporean lady. Initially her **questions** came from **her thought**. Bro Teoh advised her **to focus** on the **cultivation instead**. After one year, her understanding deepened. Then she asked whether the Buddha could exist again in form and mind. Bro Teoh eventually answered her question since she was sincere to find out. He encouraged her to focus on her cultivation and not ask too many thought based questions.
3. The Buddha spoke these words of victory after His enlightenment : –
*"Seeking but not finding the house builder,
I hurried through the round of many births:
Painful is birth ever and again.*

*O house builder, you have been seen;
You shall not build the house again.
Your rafters have been broken up,
Your ridgepole is demolished too.*
4. According to Bro Teoh, many people interpreted this above saying as indicating His last birth. But the actual understanding is complex and requires a lot of wisdom for this to be understood. The Buddha's nature exists eternally so His vows have become part of nature's laws. Those who know how to connect and develop affinity with Him or His vows will know how to benefit from it. That is the reason why we should take refuge in The Triple Gem.
5. When it comes to taking birth, this so-called **human being** consisting of the **five aggregates of form and mind** is **karmically-conditioned** out as a vehicle and tool for us to come to this **existential world**. Without the five aggregates, we cannot come. After the Buddha's Parinibbana, the question of whether the Buddha can reappear in another form and mind does not arise at all in the Theravada tradition. The words of the Buddha have been misconstrued to mean otherwise.
6. This karmically-conditioned five aggregates of form and mind can take rebirth in two ways: – the **normal rebirth** via **ignorance** (for *normal unenlightened being*) and **rebirth** through **pure consciousness** (Bodhisattvas and Great Beings). For the latter, they **choose** to take rebirth **out of love and compassion** and **not** out of **ignorance**. Sakyamuni Buddha still has a karmic nature and a spiritual nature. His spiritual nature is complete. When he comes through the pure consciousness, he will not be a Samma Sambuddha again following his earlier prediction. He will inherit the spiritual nature and come as a great being. The Theravada may find this unacceptable although for the Mahayana, this is totally acceptable.

7. (Page 34) The manifestation in form and mind can still occur though there is no craving and delusion. This was confirmed by Bro Teoh in response to the question asked by the Singapore lady.
8. Another Kalyanamitta, Sister Ellen, wrote to Bro Teoh and expressed her joy in meeting him and the Kalyanamittas as well as learning the dhamma from a great teacher. Her question was similar in nature to the Singapore lady about Bodhisattva vows and reappearing through their vows or karma. Again, Bro Teoh confirmed that this is possible. One can make aspirations to be reborn in any realm one wants to be. For the Bodhisattvas, in every life that they come, they will have to connect to their true nature (unless the form ceases too early) to inherit their past cultivations.
9. Bro Teoh related his own experience, when at the age of six or seven, his consciousness left his body. He never knew how to meditate then but he can still be aware of the cessation happening when he felt the craving force binding the body dissipating before the remnant of consciousness came out. He knew what was happening inside him because his awareness was naturally there. There was absolutely no fear.
10. When Bro Teoh connected to his true nature in 1989, he could understand all these via recalling what he had gone through earlier on. This does not apply only to him but to any cultivator who has developed such similar understanding.
11. (Page 36) When a normal living being (without a stable awareness) dies, he loses awareness very fast and kamma takes over. If there is delusion before death, the kammic consciousness will take over much earlier.
12. The **Avijja Sutta** is a **very important sutta**. One can use it **to check on one's cultivation** following the sequence or link that the Buddha has expounded. One can also check if one has done it correctly or not.
13. **Avijja** implies **ignorance of the truth or laws that govern nature, life and existence**. The *conditioned world* is a world of *conditioned entities governed by nature's laws* namely the *five universal orders (panca niyama)*. The first two scientific laws are the **physical law of nature** (utu niyama) and **biological order** of nature (bija niyama). The other three are the **spiritual laws** namely the Law of Kamma (kamma niyama), the Law of Mind (citta niyama) and the Law of Dhamma (dhamma niyama). The Buddha was able to come out with the realization of these 3 great spiritual laws.
14. The scientists are able to bring about such rapid **progress to civilization** because of their understanding of the first two scientific laws. Similarly the Buddha's complete understanding of the 3 great spiritual laws also bring about great wisdom and understanding for him to realize the secret of life in its totality. The laws that govern life and existence are very important because when we gain understanding of them, **we will know how to live life well**.
15. The **Avijja Sutta** explains clearly the **law of mind** (citta niyama) **governing ignorance** via his **Avijja sequence**. Without this understanding, we cannot really begin the cultivation. There are two sequences in the Avijja Sutta. The first sequence explains *how human beings become deluded due to ignorance and are thus trapped in samsara*. The second sequence is the **enlightenment sequence** where it explained how one can break free from this ignorance cycle.
16. Each of the factors in the sequence has its own nutriment. According to the Buddha, the *nutriments* for **avijja** are due to the **five mental hindrances**; *the nutriment for the 5 mental hindrances* are due to **the 3 ways of bad conduct** (through body, mind and speech); and the nutriment for this 3 ways of bad conduct is due to **lack of sense restraint**; *and the nutriment for this lack of sense restraint* is due to **lack of mindfulness and clear comprehension**; *and the nutriment for this lack of mindfulness and clear comprehension* is due to **ayoniso manisakara** (unwise attention); and the *nutriment for this lack of yonisomanasikara* is due to **lack of faith in The Triple Gem**; and the nutriment for the lack of faith in the Triple Gem is due to **not listening to the true dhamma**; and finally the reason or nutriment for not **listening to the dhamma** is due to **lack of dhamma/noble friends**.
17. To remove delusion, we need to reverse the order of the above sequence. Hence, with dhamma friends or Kalyanamittas, we will get to listen to the dhamma and the sequence goes on until we are able to return to the initial

link of having the 3 ways of good conducts then only can we cultivate the 4 foundations of mindfulness leading to the arising of the 7 factors of enlightenment to awaken thus removing avijja or ignorance.

18. According to Bro Teoh, the website **broteoh.com** came about through him having this concept of true Kalyanamittaship. Having real or true noble/dhamma friends or Kalyanamitta is very unique and important because according to the Buddha kalyanamittaship is 100% of the holy life. Without true Kalyanamitta, it is impossible to develop the understanding of the cultivation because having dhamma friends is one of the **pre-requisite** for becoming an ariya and **not** associating with good dhamma friends is the **starting nutriment to the wrong path leading to avijja and heedlessness**.
19. The enlightenment sequence consists of 10 links. **True knowledge leading to enlightenment** is very important and the *nutriment of this* is to have the **7 factors of enlightenment** (satta bojjhanga); and the nutriment for the 7 factors of 7 factors of enlightenment is due to the **cultivation of the four foundations of mindfulness**; and the nutriment for this is the **three ways of good conducts**; and the nutriment for this 3 ways of good conduct is due to **having restraint** in the **sense faculties**; and the nutriment for having **sense restraint in the sense faculties** is to have **daily mindfulness** and **clear comprehension**; and the nutriment for having this mindfulness and clear comprehension is to have this **yoniso manisakara**; and the nutriment for having this yonisomanasikara is to have **faith or confidence** in The **Triple Gem**; and the nutriment for having this faith is via **listening to the true dhamma**; and finally the nutriment for listening to the true dhamma is to **associate with true/good dhamma friends**.
20. The Buddha mentioned to Venerable Ananda that having noble friends is 100per cent of the holy life. Bro Teoh advised fellow Kalyanamittas to go and read the Avijja Sutta and find out where we are in our cultivation and whether we are making progress in our cultivation or not?

21. Meditation reporting

- a) Sister Alicia mentioned that two weeks ago while she was listening to the chanting of Om Mani Padme Om in Melaka, the words went into her nature. She was sitting quietly with tears flowing, feeling grateful and the chanting of Om Mani Padme Om was playing within her nature. Her awareness was with her bodily movements and chanting as one in perfect synchrony. She felt very relaxed and the mind was like **completely empty** – no words, no concept nothing at all.

Bro Teoh commented that this was a good sign. He said in that awareness there was no word, no concept or anything at all in that true nature. He advised Sis Alicia to let it stabilize for the more refine understanding to arise. The **unconditioned cannot be described** but the **subtle arising** of the *mundane mind* can still be detected by that true *mind*. The nature itself can understand many things so the state of not knowing (from the mundane mind) is the best state to be in.

- b) Bro Song reported that he had stopped joining the chanting sessions at a temple for quite a few months. But he decided to join the morning chanting again one day. After the chanting, during lunch, he could feel how silent he was within. There were no sankharas. Then, while the 'Da Pei Chan' was being chanted, he was sneezing non-stop. Later, he was told that it was the repentance chanting. The next day during Bro Teoh's Sunday class, instead of lying down to meditate and listen as usual, he tried sitting up to listen to the dhamma talk. Bro Song was very surprised that he could still understand the talk from within his nature as before while in the sitting posture.

Bro Teoh explained that what Bro Song went through was a natural consequence of what he had been doing earlier on. In the past, he asked questions related to the cultivation. Bro Teoh used to advise him not to ask but to do. Even when he was lying down, the vibration had gone into the heart area. Even after he had connected to his nature, the understanding has not stabilized. It is always the thought that comes in via the 'back door' to ask questions. This understanding cannot be committed to memory because it will become knowledge if you do that. After Bro Song has understood that point, and from then on he just cultivate with faith, sincerity and diligence.

This is the reason why all these can happen when the understanding had stabilized. Brother Teoh also mentioned that seeking repentance is deeper than asking for forgiveness. By doing so, one can break one's karmic obstructions and enable one's cultivation to flow more smoothly.

22. A Kalyanamitta sent Bro Teoh a whatsapp message from The Daily Tejaniya postings, quoting: *'there are two kinds of samadhi: one that comes from concentrating on one object exclusively, and the samadhi that is born of right view, right attitude and right thought. There are two corresponding practices ...'*
23. According to Bro Teoh, Samadhi and Vipassana **cannot** be practised. Practice is **repetitive** and **mechanical** because to practise is to repeat doing something. It is just like practising to be skilful in playing a game, cooking etc. Whereas Vipassana is **an awakening**, an **insights** into phenomena borne of the direct seeing. There must be conditions for it to arise via the **silent mind**. Hence, there is **no thought** or **practice** involved.
24. Bro Teoh explained that with **wisdom** *at the moment of sense experience*, there is *yoniso manisakara*. Hence, one **will not react** through **delusion**. **Wisdom** *enables one to accept things for what they are*. With right view, there is no reaction. Sati is **very stable** leading to **Samadhi** at the moment of sense experience. This mind in Samadhi **does not stir** because it is collected and unwavering hence it *can see things as they are*. The enlightenment factor of upekkha (borne of wisdom) will enables one to accord and flow with conditions. One will act accordingly without the **stirring** of the mind. It is not what people think. There is **no acting** according to memory (which is **not acting** at all). One only act according to wisdom following Noble 8-fold path. The silent mind can see things as they are. Truth has no words or concepts. One must stabilize one's cultivation to understand all these.
25. Bro Teoh stumbled upon the Avijja Sutta while preparing the write up for his website thereby enabling him to share it with us. He kept on emphasizing on **Yoniso Manisakara** and the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness**. According to the Buddha, only **after overcoming covetousness and grief** can one really cultivate it. If we are still affected by these two mental states, we cannot cultivate the four foundations of mindfulness as yet. This is clearly explained in the Avijja Sutta.

(Above draft prepared by Puan Chee)