

Brother Pan & Sister Angie's House Dana dated 18th Nov 2018 (outline short notes)

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-181118-Pan-Angie-House-Dana.mp3>

1. **Life is our greatest teacher.** It is only through our **relationship** (*with nature, society, our loved ones, office colleagues, etc.*) in life that we learn. When we separate ourselves from others (like the people and the environment we are interacting with), we will create a **false personality** that can make us **selfish, violent** and **fearful**.
2. **Nature is full of loving kindness and compassion.** Nature always **give and give**; the air we breathe and the water we drink are given free by nature. Whereas human beings are so selfish. We **not only pollute nature** and our **environment physically** through our **excretion and bodily discharges**, we also **pollute the world mentally** with our *negative (evil and selfish) thoughts and tendencies*. The **summation** of all our thoughts (positive and negative) forms the **collective consciousness** of that vicinity. When the environment reaches the maximum threshold of negativity, it will cleanse itself of the negativity through **nature's way** such as via earthquake, volcano eruption war and other nature's disasters, etc.
3. Our body works the same way as we are the miniature of Mother Nature. If we have too much stress, negativity and inappropriate lifestyles, the **body will response accordingly through pain, tumors, disease, sickness etc.** Then we have to **operate** or **remove** the **chronic part** that is **affecting** our health.
4. Have **right view** to always arise the **right thought**. Apply the **4 right efforts** to **purify** our mind. Contemplate and reflect deep into life to develop the **understanding** of the **dharma** as taught by the **Buddha** to **constantly straighten** our views.
5. In order not to miss out on truth, **listening attentively** with an **open** mind is **very important**.
6. **Always be mindful and heedful** otherwise we run the **risk** of *creating serious karmic negativities or mistakes* which are hard to endure/rewind.
7. When we **multitask**, there will be **lapses** in thoughts and we are **more prone** to be **heedless** as we are no more as **attentive** as before.
8. We **cannot learn about our self** if we **separate or seclude** our self from others. If we are **attentive** and **mindful** during our **relationships** with others, *we can see our selfishness, anxiety, fear, desire, emotions and self-delusions*, etc. We **need clear awareness to see all these**. In **seclusion**, one can experience **beautiful calmness** and **peacefulness** but when one **come out of that seclusion**, one do not know how to interact with others and one may not know how to cope and deal with real life situations.
9. With wisdom, thoughts are beautiful. Wisdom is an understanding, not knowledge which is rigid. With wisdom, one **can resolve issues** and **problems amicably**.
10. Thinking can make one more cunning, deceitful and smarter but it **cannot give rise to wisdom** to help us solve our problems wisely and amicably.
11. **In the seeing, there is only the seeing consciousness. There is no one to see.** When we input the content of consciousness (our views, opinions and conditioning) into what we see, we **perceive a personality** (the "I" and the "Me") as the one who sees, **resulting in division** (separate into "you" and "others"). This is **self-delusion**.
12. So **how can we see things as they are** (without delusion)? How do I see things with wisdom before the input of content of consciousness? We need **daily mindfulness, constant reflection** and **listening to the Dharma** leading

to the arising of **yoniso manasikara** (wisdom or wise attention at the moment of sense door contact), **faith** in the **Triple Gem**, then only can we have **sense restraint**.

13. If we understand how our **old way of response** *leads to sorrow and lamentation*, then we have **to straighten** our **views** to have the **ability to accept whatever arises as the reality of life and existence**. It may be due to Karma (what one did in the past). We **should not project** our *thoughts to arise the fear or blame others leading to angry and jealousy*, etc. If conditions are such or like that then things will be the way it is or such too. It **cannot be otherwise so learn to see things as they are!** *For people are just the way they are and the world is the world.*
14. If one is **diagnose with cancer**, it is just **an aspect of life's reality** (as stated in the 1st Noble truth). So accept it and be calm. Then with **clarity of mind** look at your options with a calm and understanding mind – if need to ask for forgiveness ask, repent, seek second opinion from other DOCTOR or PATIENTS who had recovered from it then just do them. All these are **more tangible** than to arise the unnecessary fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow and lamentation. Then perform and cultivate wholesomeness and finally to invoke power of merits for causes and conditions for turn around to overcome your difficulties.
15. Change the way you arise your thoughts and you will be able to change your old way of deluded living into a nobler way of heedful living.
16. When we live life, we **need to communicate and interact with others and the environment**. Hence, life can be our **greatest teacher**. Learn to be aware of your thoughts and emotions. How wrong thoughts make you miserable **then refine** upon your speeches, actions and thoughts via **following the advices of the Buddha**. Learn to be mindful and aware most of the time. *Transform yourself with wisdom to be a blessing to all.* With wisdom and understanding, our love and compassion (virtue) will grow.
17. Only **when we are mindful** while in the **midst of life**, can we learn from life.
18. Have gratitude. Brother Teoh tells the story of how **gratitude** assisted his Mother to be able to handle all the hardships in life **without complaint** as she was **grateful** that she was able to get out of China, out of her suffering world while in China at that time.
19. Sister Angie asked how to save all beings as stated in the Bodhisattva Vow, especially those people in the Middle East who are rigid in their views. Brother Teoh answered that **these vows are to be taken with understanding** and there **must be conditions** for one to save these beings. Beings are subject to their Karma and is beyond us to save them if there is **no condition**. We do not save just for the sake of making merits.
20. Brother Kok Loon asked why we need to touch the food when we offer them to the Triple Gem during house dana. Brother Teoh explained that it symbolized that we are formally offering it with understanding.
21. Brother Kok Loon asked how to send metta to others. Brother Teoh explained that we need to visualize the recipient and have metta in ourselves. Initially, we will need to 'will' out the feeling of metta. Later, when we have metta in us, the metta (a very soothing feeling/energy from the heart) will flow out by itself.
22. Sister Keat Hoon and Sister Angie asked questions on the practice of releasing life by certain Buddhists. Brother Teoh explained why basing on his understanding he will not personally encourage people to do it as there is no point releasing a life when that life may not survive or be self-sufficient in the environment it is being released into or it may create unnecessary demand during Wesak day/festival thus encouraging people to catch them. Moreover there are **many other much better and nobler way to cultivate virtue and wholesomeness**. Paying respect mindfully to Triple Gems, strictly keeping ones precepts and diligently cultivate the meditative spiritual faculties and meditate daily are much better ways to develop virtue and wholesomeness.

(Above draft is by Sister Mun Yuen)