

A Final Summary Of The SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA

Based on a **direct transcript** from the **recording**
Done during the Dhamma talk

Delivered by: Brother Teoh Kian Koon
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1 Preface

It is Brother Teoh's **sincere** hope that Dhamma friends, spiritual practitioners, seekers of truth, and cultivators will be able **to make use** of the enclosed **transcript notes** to develop **a better understanding** of the **Dhamma as taught** by the Buddha so that they may **progress along the path of dhamma** to become more **virtuous, noble** and **wiser** human beings that can be a **blessing** to all of humanity and mankind.

As these notes were mostly **compiled** based on a **direct transcript** from the recording of the **last Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** class (dated 19.4.2015); the text is aligned as closely as possible to the **colloquial speech** in the talk. **However some editorial amendments have been made to the text without detracting** from the **essence** of the talk. With this, it is hoped that readers can **adjust** themselves accordingly to better understand its **true meaning** and **intent**. A **good** way to do this is **to listen** to the recordings **first before** reading the transcript notes. To listen to the recording you can download the talk at this link: "Teoh WPCS.190415.MP3":

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tthug3vh8vhudob/Teoh%20WPCS.190415.MP3?dl=0>

Alternatively, contact Brother Ng Swee Aun at sang47500@yahoo.com for further details.

2 Acknowledgement

It is the donors' **sincere intentions** that these transcript notes be **given free** to all those who are **interested** and have the **affinity** to receive them. I would like to take this opportunity **to thank** and **rejoice** in the **generosity** and **wholesomeness** of all those **Dhamma friends** or **Kalyanamittas** who have donated and helped out in the **transcription, typing, typesetting, formatting, proof reading, etc** to make this **free distribution** of dhamma dāna possible.

Special thanks should be accorded to **Sister Lim Eng Bee** who had personally taken the **great initiative** to develop her draft transcript for my **subsequent editing** thereby enabling this dhamma book to be printed.

By the **power of all this wholesomeness**, may all beings be **well and happy, free** from all mental and physical sufferings and dangers and may there be **love, peace and joy** - deep **within** their hearts. And may it also **pave the way** for there to be **causes and conditions** for all dhamma friends who have **donated or helped out** in one way or another to realize their **good and noble wishes/aspirations** as soon as possible.

With Metta always,

By Brother Teoh Kian Koon

(Dated: 31.08.2015).

3 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Dhamma Sharing

3.1 Pūja

We can start the pūja now. **Compose** your mind, develop your **faith**, and then **pay respect mindfully** to Lord Buddha. We shall pay our respects first before we start the pre-pūja:

Nā Mó Běn Shī Shì Jiā Móu Ní Fó 南无本师释迦牟尼佛 (3x)

Nā Mó Guān Shì Yīn Pú Sà 南无观世音菩萨 (3x)

Salutation to Lord Buddha:-

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa (3X)

Taking of the Three Refuges:-

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyampi : Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatiyampi : Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Renewing of the Five Precepts:-

Pānātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Surā-meraya-majja-pamā-daṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.

Sādhū! Sādhū! Sādhū! (Rejoicing)

Okay, we shall now pay **respect mindfully** to Lord Buddha, Guanyin Bodhisattva and all the Worthy Ones to end the pre-pūja.

3.2 Dhamma Sharing By Bro. Teoh

Just relax yourself, make yourself comfortable. Relax your body and mind and then maintain some form of attention. Now we can start.

Okay today it coincides with the consecration and opening ceremony of the Aloka Stupa of Mitraville, the monastery of Reverend Mahinda at Kota Kinabalu. If I'm not wrong some of our dhamma friends have gone to Kota Kinabalu to join in the celebration. It's an occasion to **rejoice**, because that place is quite nicely built. I think Sister Padmasuri and her husband, Brother Tune are there. I don't know about the rest.

Just now before we start, I mentioned about this book: "The **Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra**". It will be the next book we are using after our today's **last Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta class**. As stated on the white board, today will be our last Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta class because we had covered almost all of the sutta's four foundations of mindfulness and we are left with a little bit more to go.

The other thing that I need you all to understand is the **conditions behind** all these. For our Tuesday class we are going to start our **Diamond Sutra class** soon. They wanted it as soon as possible. I don't know what the reason was then, but now I think I know. They actually wanted it to begin this Tuesday (21st April 2015). This Diamond Sutra is a **very unique** and **very powerful** Mahāyāna sutra.

It is **meant** for the great cultivators of the way. And the merits borne of understanding and cultivating this sutra are limitless and beyond the comprehension of normal minds of living beings. There were many examples given in the sutra. The Buddha did mention: “Even if you were to offer the 7 treasures to all the Great Buddhas and the Great Beings of all the 3000 universes before for many lives, all these merits cannot be compared to the merits accrued by someone who had actually **studied** and **cultivated** the Diamond Sutra.”

Then if someone is able to understand just four lines or four stanzas of the sutra and then able to teach living beings, the Buddha said **such merits far exceed** all those **merits mentioned above** because it is about **cultivating wholesomeness** and **merits without** “mark”; **without** the **mark** of a “self”, **without** the “mark” of **any living beings or any concept/idea** of Dhamma. It is very profound. It is indeed a very rare Teaching and very few people **can teach** such a sutra as mentioned in one of the chapters.

There are 32 chapters in the Diamond Sutra. They are all **very profound** and **very beautiful**. But there is no real teaching inside there. There is no real Dhamma inside there. It only tells you **how to cultivate**. The **way you cultivate** is very important. Diamond Sutra is very unique. It’s the Teaching for Great Beings, for those who walk the Bodhisattva way to become Sammāsambuddha. If you want to become a Sammāsambuddha, you must understand this Diamond Sutra.

Earlier on Sister Lee had also wanted me to teach this Diamond Sutra immediately after the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta class. But I told her I cannot agree to that because I cannot be teaching the same sutra in 2 different places at the same time. That is something that I never do, my nature never does. So I told her definitely not Diamond Sutra. Then conditions just fell into place after that because she suddenly managed to get hold of this book. This is a very important book, a Mahāyāna book. They called it “The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra” (六祖大师法宝坛经). And this book has a lot of great teachings of Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch.

Thus far this is also one of the very great Mahāyāna sutra that we can develop the understanding. This sutra has more Dhammas and the Dhammas are very penetrative. They are all **beyond the mind**. It looks like the Dhamma is going to take off again to another level after we start on these two sutra (i.e. the Diamond Sutra and The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra). So today like I promised we will finish off the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Okay where were we - at which page? Was it at page 48? Yes, at page 48, item 4.

Just to recap:

3.2.1 First Foundation Of Mindfulness – Kāyānupassanā

The first foundation of mindfulness is Kāyānupassanā. Kāya is the physical body. So Kāyānupassanā is mindfulness on our physical body, our Kāya. You can **develop mindfulness or attention on your physical body, entire body, and your postures**. When the body is in the **sitting posture**, you **maintain awareness or attention** on that **posture**. When it is in the **standing posture** – you also maintain awareness of it; **walking posture** – also **aware**. Aware here means **Body (or posture) and mind as one**. Sitting - aware; lying down also aware. Then we move on to develop the awareness of all those **connecting movements**, between the **four postures** leading to the cultivation of **daily mindfulness or sati sampajañña (mindfulness and clear comprehension of all actions and all activities within the present moment)**.

Then while doing the formal meditation, we can also be **mindful of our breathing** - the in and out breath. The **breath** is also **part of Kāya**. You can also be **mindful** of the **rising and falling** of the abdomen, of your **heartbeat** and your other **bodily vibrations**. You can also **cultivate mindfulness** of whatever **dynamic movements** that you have developed. Then you can also develop all the other balance of **mindfulness cultivations** related to Kāya. Like mindfulness of the **4 Elements**, the **32 Parts of the Body**, the **9 stages of cemetery decomposition** of the body. Those are all the first foundation practices.

3.2.2 Second Foundation Of Mindfulness – Vedanānupassanā

Then we move on to the second foundation which is Vedanānupassanā. Vedanā is feeling, feeling that arises within the form and mind. Whenever there is contact, feeling will arise. Feeling is one of the 7 universal mental factors. The rest are Contact (phassa), Perception (saññā), Volition (cetanā), One-pointedness (ekaggatā), life faculty/vitality (jivhindriya/jīvita), and Attention (manasikāra). The purpose of this **mindfulness of feeling** cultivation is to understand **how your mind stirs** and **how your mind develops craving**. Upon contact, feeling arises. **Initially**, feeling is **just pure** feeling, but because of your **wrong view**, your **conditioning**, your **habitual tendencies**, you **react** and **stir** your mind, thereby **triggering off likes** and **dislikes**, **pleasant** and **unpleasant** sense experiences. Do understand that likes and dislikes, pleasant and unpleasant sense experiences, they are **hindrances** of mind. They are also the **first two evil roots** of **greed** and **hatred**. That's why the Buddha said, 'When feeling has **become unpleasant feeling**, you must be **aware**. And **when feeling has become pleasant** feeling, **you must also be aware**'. The reason being, **these are hindrances** of mind that have arisen. Which means you have to silence your mind **to trace the origination factors** to understand **how the unarisen hindrance** comes to be? Then when you continue **to silence** and **relax** you will come to understand **how the arisen hindrance** ceased to be. You will come to understand that **the mind will return** to its **natural state of inner peace before the stirring** if you **just silence**

and **relax without doing anything**. The reason why I have always advised you to just silence your mind while meditating and **don't try to know** or do anything is because the doing is always by the thought.

This is Dhammānupassanā's first category of cultivation, which is mindfulness of the 5 mental hindrances. So they are related. In the case of neutral feeling born of delusion it is the same. Because it is not related to you, you will have **no urgency** or **no reaction** to it, due to your delusion. You think only of yourself, your loved ones; these are people who are important to you. Whereas people whom you don't know or don't have any relationship with you, you are **indifferent** towards them. So **indifferent** here is **not equanimity** of mind. You can be indifferent because it has got nothing to do with you. That is why you are not interested because it doesn't affect you. That's how you can have this **neutral feeling**; you don't feel anything because it has nothing to do with you. Your mind is like neutral, but this is also **delusion**.

That's why when delusion arises, you must understand, because you have preference. Not related to you, not for you, no advantage to you, you don't want to do. When it has nothing to do with you and your loved ones, or your company, you also don't want to have anything to do with them. So this type of neutral feeling is called indifference. **Indifference is a delusion** because you have this view and opinion of who are your loved ones, who are the people whom you actually care for.

3.2.3 Third Foundation Of Mindfulness – Cittānupassanā

Now we move on to the Third Foundation of mindfulness. The third foundation is Cittānupassanā. We have to develop the **mindfulness** on the **consciousness** itself and **its contents**. The content of consciousness is very important because upon contact, **not only** feeling arises, but at the same time, **consciousness** also arises. Like what we have understood from the **physics experiment** - when the switch is turned on, the light bulb lights up; i.e. the 7 universals arise. So upon contact, feeling is one of the 7 universals. Perception is another one, and then the reactions, the stirring of the mind, are the other fields. So when you start to understand, you will come to know that upon contact, not only feeling and perception arise, but consciousness and other things also arise. Since your mind is also an organ, so in a similar way, when you **think** the mind makes **contact**. Then upon contact, **mental consciousness** arises.

That's what Dependent Origination is all about. It clearly states, 'Avijjā paccaya saṅkhāra', - meaning dependent on ignorance, activities of mind arise; wanting to know, wanting to experience, the mind starts to think. When it **starts to think** it **makes contact** with mind. When it makes contact with mind, what happens? **Not only feeling** arises, **consciousness** also arises. That's why Avijjā paccaya saṅkhāra then saṅkhāra paccaya viññāṇaṃ. Then you **input the content of consciousness** through your **views, opinions** and **conditioning**. That's how the **5 mental Aggregates** of Form and Mind (nāma rūpaṃ) come about. Otherwise it is just **pure**

consciousness. Like the Buddha said, **“In the seeing there is only the seeing consciousness; no one to see. In the hearing, there is only the hearing consciousness; no one to hear.”** As you meditate via developing the **mindfulness with your silent mind**, you will **understand all these.**

Then regarding the content of consciousness, when it arises, you have to be very mindful. It's just like Vedanānupassanā. When feeling has already stirred and become pleasant or unpleasant or neutral feeling; you have to be aware! So under Cittānupassanā, the Buddha said if your citta has this content of consciousness which is **greed**, you must be **aware** - that this **evil root** is there. When there is emotion, anger, hatred, envy, jealousy, - you also need to be aware!

Then when there is fear, worry, anxiety, which is part and parcel of delusion, - you also need to be aware; including sorrow and lamentation. And when you meditate until your mind is very peaceful, your consciousness is very quiet, very tranquil and very spacious; you **also need to be aware** of them, the content of consciousness.

When your **mind is restless** with the **hindrances**, you also need to be aware! That's why Cittānupassanā can make you understand a lot of things. How you **function as a human being**, how the mind manifests and conditions you into what you are. You can also see

the Dependent Origination, the Four Noble Truths, the essential Dhammas - they are all within your own Form and Mind.

3.2.4 Fourth Foundation Of Mindfulness – Dhammānupassanā

Dhammānupassanā is the **4th Foundation** of mindfulness cultivation within the Four Foundations of Mindfulness discourse and there are 5 categories of practices, under Dhammānupassanā.

3.2.4.1 Dhammānupassanā 1st Category Of Practice – Mindfulness Of The Five Mental Hindrances

After you have gone through these first 3 Foundations of mindfulness, which are Kāyānupassanā, Vedanānupassanā and Cittānupassanā, you can then move on to cultivate Dhammānupassanā. Dhammānupassanā is the ultimate foundation of mindfulness that can awaken and liberate you. The first essential Dhamma is the 5 hindrances of mind. The Buddha said, ‘these are **mental hindrances** that **hinder** your mind from entering the **meditative state** of **inner peace, inner calmness** and **inner awareness**.

That’s why you need to be aware when the hindrances are still there. Then you need to be aware of how the **unarisen hindrance** comes to be. Later on when you just **silence your mind** and **maintain mindfulness**, you will come **to understand** how it **ceased** to be. If you know how it arises and how it ceases then you will know how to

deal with it **retrospectively**. You will know how **to investigate** into this dhamma. That's why the first category of Dhammānupassanā practice is **mindfulness** of the **Five Hindrances**. This is the first of the 5 essential Dhamma that you need to develop mindfulness on.

3.2.4.2 Dhammānupassanā 2nd Category Of Practice – Mindfulness Of The Five Mental Aggregates Of Form And Mind

Then you develop the second category of Dhammānupassanā practice which is mindfulness of the five mental Aggregates of Form and Mind. You will then start to see your Nāma Rūpaṃ, the content of consciousness and the consciousness itself, which together are the 5 mental Aggregates of mind. When you understand that, you will know how they arose through the sense bases. Such is form, such is its origination and such is its disappearance.....

3.2.4.3 Dhammānupassanā 3rd Category Of Practice – Mindfulness Of The Six Internal Sense Bases And Six External Sense Bases

The third category of Dhammānupassanā practice or cultivation is **mindfulness** of the **Six Internal Sense Bases** and the **Six External Sense Bases**. These are very important cultivations. After you have developed that cultivation, you will come to know how the **un-arisen sense door consciousness** with its content comes to be. You will also come to understand how **dependent on the eye** and **material forms** the arising of the **non-arisen fetter** comes to be; then he understands how the abandoning of the **arisen** fetter comes

to be; and he understands how the **non-arising in the future** of the **abandoned fetter** comes to be.

Then you can trace from there the **origination factor** of the **fetter/defilement**, the **hindrances** and the **evil roots**. How the mind that has **delusion or wrong view** or **habitual tendencies** and **conditioning react** and **stir**. You will be able to **trace them** through the **mindfulness** of your sense bases, because they always come in through one of your sense bases, either when you see something, hear something, smell, taste, tactilely feel or think. But the most powerful of these 6 sense doors are the first three doors **of hearing, seeing and thinking**. You have to focus on them because these are **very powerful sense door activities**. When you **can trace the origination factors** especially so while in **the midst of life, in daily life** you will develop the **appropriate wisdom and understanding**. That's why **daily mindfulness** is the **real meditation**. You will come to understand **how you get angry**, how you **become fearful**, how you develop **emotional negativity, selfishness, deceitfulness** and all those other **unwholesome mind states**. It always comes through one of your sense door activities.

Most of the time, it is either when you see something that you don't like or when you see something that tempted you to have craving, desire, greed or lust for it. Or you hear something people said that made you unhappy, miserable or fearful. So it's either through hearing, seeing or when your thought recalls through **memories** (your **scars of memories**, your **phobia**, etc). When you are young how you get yourself into situations that develop a lot of fear, a lot

of phobia. Or certain things happened that made you unhappy and miserable. So when you recall through memories those **negative experiences** will come and haunt you; create fear, worry and anxiety in you. It then makes you unhappy and miserable. Sometimes it recalls the sorrow and lamentation via recalling the death of a loved one, or the loss of a breadwinner within your family, etc.

So all these are how your mind has power over you. If you cannot understand all these then you cannot develop wisdom. That's why when you **trace the origination factors** of how these defilements arise, how these evil roots arise, how these mental hindrances arise, then you will know how **to reverse it retrospectively**. Retrospectively reversing it means you have **to reflect and contemplate** and then develop **the right view**, to **straighten** your view. You have to learn **to see things as they are; accept them for what they are**. Do not go against nature; **do not react** to anything in life. **Things are just the way they are**. People **are just the way they are**. The **world is the world**. It's you **within** that must have the **wisdom to accept them for what they are**. Their life, their conditioning, their kamma, **they are just the way they are**. **Deluded people will do deluded things; ignorant people will do ignorant things; selfish people will do selfish things**. It's not for you to say **they are right or wrong as they are just the way they are**.

If you have this understanding you are **always at peace**. **When you are at peace the mind does not stir**. When the mind does **not stir**,

there is **equanimity**, there is **clarity**, there is **understanding** then we will **know how to act**. We act **to resolve issues/things amicably**. Via what? Via **applying** the **Noble 8-Fold Path** because Noble 8-Fold Path is **incapable of negativity**. That's why the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness** will **lead** you to **this understanding**. After you have traced the origination factors you will then know how to retrospectively reverse it. This is where we stopped (at page 48) during our previous class. We can now continue our today's sharing.

3.2.4.4 Dhammānupassanā 4th Category Of Practice – Mindfulness Of The Seven Factors Of Enlightenment

The next category of cultivation within Dhammānupassanā is mindfulness of the **7 Factors of Enlightenment**. When you have **straightened your view**, **understood** the meditation and the cultivation, **these 7 Factors of Enlightenment will keep on arising**. And you will be able to be **mindful** of them. Can you all follow? If you cannot follow I'll write it down, because these **will summarize** to you, the whole of the **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta practices** that you need to understand so that you **can cultivate them with understanding**. The reason being, this Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is **very profound** and **very few people** in this world **can truly understand** what this Teaching is, not to say **cultivate it**. If you **cannot understand** then **how can you put it into practice?** If you yourself **have not realized or cultivated it**, then **how can you share** and **teach** people? It's **impossible**. That's why this Teaching is **very unique**, **very valuable** and it's **very rare** to come across such a Teaching.

Now we turn to page 48, item 4, - **Mindfulness of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment** or in Pāḷi it is called Satta Bojjhaṅga. Satta is seven, Bojjhaṅga are the enlightenment factors.

The Buddha said:

And further O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating dhamma in the dhamma of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment. How O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating dhamma in the dhamma of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment? (Note: The book used the words 'mental objects', you can ignore it. The Pāḷi word is Dhamma, and Dhamma is not mental objects.)

Now you have to pay attention to the next sentence that follows:

Here, O bhikkhus, when the enlightenment factor of SATI or mindfulness is present, a bhikkhu understands or is aware that: I have the enlightenment factor of SATI or mindfulness; or when the enlightenment factor of SATI or mindfulness is absent, he understands.

So this is very important. When you are **no longer mindful**, **no longer heedful**, you **must be aware!** Do you understand? What does this mean? You are **already heedless**, **lost in thoughts**; **preoccupied** with your **anger**, your **emotion**, your **fear**, your **heedlessness**, your **conditioning** and you are most of the time with the **mundane mind**, **hitting out** at people, **arguing** with people, **quarreling** with people.

That's real **heedlessness**. If you can't even **be aware** of that then **how are you going to cultivate?**

The first factor of enlightenment is **sati**. The main intention of you coming here to meditate is to train your mind, to have **sati** and then to **stabilize** it. If you **can't even** be **mindful** in your **daily life** it means you are **not serious** about meditation. You are being **heedless**; you never really have the **resolve** to be **mindful**. If you can't be **mindful** in the **midst of life**, then you are **heedless**. And the Buddha said, **'The heedless are as if dead!' Spiritually death!**

You heard the bird chirping? It is as if these 'dhamma' **birds** also **understand** that it is **very dangerous** to be **heedless**. See, the chirping of the bird is so loud! I don't know whether the recording can also record the chirping sound of the birds or not? Cannot? But the voice is very sharp. Hopefully it can. If **birds also can understand** and **living beings cannot understand** then we really do have a problem!

These 7 Factors of Enlightenment, you have to be **ever mindful** of them, especially so after you had **cultivated** to a certain extent **with understanding** and you will have **a lot of joy** and you will know whether **you have progressed or not**. If the Factors of Enlightenment are **totally not** there, then can I ask you one very simple question? **Have you progressed?** Why are you all so quiet? If you don't even have any factors of Enlightenment then how do you **expect** to be enlightened? Do you understand?

If you have **sati** which is the first factor of Enlightenment, at least it is the beginning. If Sati also doesn't have then how can you start the cultivation? After having developed Sati you still have to stabilize it? Without Sati how can one move on to cultivate the second factor of Enlightenment? What is the Second Factor of Enlightenment? Yes, investigation of Dhamma, very good. **Without sati how can one investigate the Dhamma?** How to put to test all the Dhammapada verses, all the Teaching, all the essential Dhamma that the Buddha had taught? It's impossible. So the **cultivation is very simple when you understand. SATI is most important** and you must develop it because it is also one of the **5 spiritual faculties**. To be **heedful** you must have **sati**. To be **mindful you must have sati**. To **cultivate** the 4 foundations of mindfulness you must also have **sati**. **Without** sati you are **heedless**, and **the heedless are as if dead!** All these point towards the **importance** of developing sati. If everything also you **need sati** and yet you didn't see this rather **clear message** of the Buddha then **how are you going to progress?** The Buddha said, **'Heedfulness is the path to the deathless, whereas heedlessness is the path to the dead! The heedful never die and the heedless are as if dead!'** This is Dhammapada verse 21 and it also confirms **the danger of heedlessness**.

That's why if you don't train your mind to be **ever mindful, to cultivate the Noble 8-Fold Path**, to be **heedful, you're as if dead!** **Spiritually** you have **no chance**. You don't stand a chance. You can go for meditation retreats for umpteen years, I can tell you, - also no

use. If in the **midst of daily life** you are **not heedful** and you are **not mindful**, you can **never penetrate** the **real Dhamma**. The Teaching is **so simple** yet you make it **so difficult** because if you **don't understand**, you can be **wasting your time** cultivating **thought based meditation leading to knowledge** and **not true Dhamma**. So this first part, can you all understand?

After so many years of learning the dhamma if you still do not understand **the importance of sati** to be **heedful** then it is too bad. **Your life, you better decides how you want to live it**. Ok we shall move on.

Here, O bhikkhus, when the enlightenment factor of SATI or mindfulness is present, a bhikkhu understands: I have the enlightenment factor of SATI or mindfulness; or when the enlightenment factor of SATI or mindfulness is absent, he understands: I have not the enlightenment factor of mindfulness;

(That means the monk who is aware, **understands** when he is heedless, **no longer mindful** and no longer **heedful**. Similarly he is also aware that he is heedful.)

And he understands how the arising of the **non-arisen** enlightenment factor of mindfulness comes to be.

And he also understands how the completion by culture of the arisen enlightenment factor of mindfulness comes to be.

Do you see the important pointers as expressed by this sentence? If you can't even understand how SATI comes about or how the un-arisen sati comes to be, then how are you going to develop it? Do you understand? That is why I said it's like swimming. Don't try to know. Like bowing, just do the bowing (body and mind as one) **until the daily mindfulness and attentiveness of the bodily movements arise then you will understand what sati is.** Just like you do until you know how to swim, then you will understand what swimming is.

Sati is the same. If you do until sati is a part of you, then you will understand what sati is and how sati comes to be. It is **training your mind to be with the moment.** Anchor it to your Kāyā. That's why Kāyānupassanā is very important. Your Kāyā is always **within the moment.** If you are mindful of it without thought, then you have sati. Then you use it **to anchor** the mind which is **no longer heedlessly** wondering off; thinking and lost in thought doing all those funny things. That is why the **untrained mind is heedless.** The Buddha did mention; the **untrained mind is like a devil's workshop.** Do you know what a devil is? A Devil is **a very evil being.** If the evil being is inside your mind and your mind is like a workshop for the evil being to do all the funny things then what will happen to you?

Whereas the **trained mind is different,** it's **so peaceful, so beautiful, so still, so silent** and it **listens to** you. It has got **no idea, no thought, no view and no opinion.** It's **just silent, peaceful and fully aware** of the **reality,** and the **inner nature.** All these **saṅkhāra creations,** they are **from the thought.** Your views, your opinions of what things

should be or should not be, they are all saṅkhāra and saṅkhāra being aniccaṃ, or impermanent, they come and they go. Then why do you still grasp, cling and give meaning to them? Why with **every moment of perception**, the **phenomena** world, is like **so real to you**? And you can get yourself **entangled** and **so engrossed** in all these things that you come to perceive. Why do you hold on so **tenaciously** to **your view** and **your opinion**, until you **become so rigid, so incapable** of **understanding**. This is what the mind is all about. If you train it, it will become beautiful; if you don't train it, it will become **heedless**. So this is what **cultivation** is all about. **Without** mindfulness, you **cannot move**, because **mindfulness** is the **first enlightenment factor**.

I had already explained, without mindfulness, you cannot be heedful. The heedless are as if dead. Without mindfulness there can be **no investigation** of Dhamma, which means the second factor of enlightenment also cannot arise. Without mindfulness you **cannot cultivate** the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness. Without mindfulness you cannot **cultivate Noble 8-Fold Path**. You **cannot** be **aware of your mental intention**, the defilement, the **3 evil roots**. Then you cannot understand who you are and what you are?

That's why mindfulness is the most important and my teacher, the Thai monk, Phra Ajahn Yantra, used to tell me, '**without mindfulness** you are **very poor**'. He always said, 'you can be very wealthy materialistically, but without mindfulness you are very poor, spiritually'. All your wealth, your reputation, your status can never

buy you wisdom and can never help you when you **confront the realities** of life and existence. All these are very powerful Dhamma. When you understand them they become so beautiful. When you don't understand, you become so heedless. Now I'll read on.

'When the enlightenment factor of the investigation of Dhamma is present, he understands he has the enlightenment factor of Dhamma investigation. '

It means when Dhammavicaya or Dhamma investigation is present, he understands. (Of course in the text they used the word 'he knows' instead of using the words 'he understands'. Actually there is nothing to know, he just understands and that is it.)

This Dhamma investigation is to mainly develop the **2nd turning contemplative** wisdom. When you have the **creative nature**, to contemplate deep into the Dhamma, then you will know you are investigating the Dhamma. Inquiry comes from what? It is just like what I used to share with you all on the 3 turnings of the 4 Noble Truths. Inquiry comes from the **2nd turnings cultivation**. You can inquire - why did the Buddha say, 'Birth is suffering, old age, sickness and death are suffering?' Then after that you inquire deeper, how can I understand that? Then in the final summary, why did the Buddha say, 'In short, it is due to the living beings' ignorance that conditions them to grasp and cling on to **the 5 aggregates of form and mind**; giving rise to the **5 grasping** aggregates, which is the

cause of suffering’? Why did the Buddha summarize it that way?
How can I understand all these?

To understand all these you have to **reflect, contemplate** into what these **5 aggregates** form and mind are. If you don’t even know what they are, then how can you proceed? That’s why you have to know what they are and then be mindful of these 5 aggregates of form and mind. After that only can you investigate via Dhamma investigation to investigate whether the Buddha’s final summary of the 1st Noble Truth is true or not? And when I grasp and cling on to the 2 aspects of the 5 aggregate of form and mind, does suffering arise?

This is what the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is all about. Constant inquiry, contemplation, reflection and cultivation and throughout the days, the factors of enlightenment must be there. That’s why ever mindful to cultivate the Noble 8-Fold Path, and the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness is part of the Noble 8-Fold Path. That’s why this aspect of Dhamma, mindfulness of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment is very important.

After that the Buddha continued:

Then when Enlightenment Factor of Investigation of Dhamma is absent, he understands that it is absent. And he understands how the arising of the non-arisen Factor of Enlightenment of investigation of Dhamma or Dhammavicaya comes to be and how

the completion by culture of the arisen Enlightenment Factor of Dhammavicaya comes to be.

Then when Enlightenment Factor of Vīriya or spiritual zeal is present, he knows or he understands that he has this Enlightenment Factor of Vīriya. And when Enlightenment Factor of Vīriya is absent, he understands that it is absent. And he understands how the non-arisen Enlightenment Factor of Vīriya comes to be and how the completion by culture of the arisen Enlightenment Factor of Vīriya comes to be.

Vīriya is spiritual zeal, the spiritual tenacity, to cultivate the Buddha Dhamma to develop the understanding. It can only be strengthened when you can investigate into the Dhamma and **come to realize** that the Buddha Dhamma and all the essential Dhamma that the Buddha taught **has stood up to investigation**. That's why under the **salutation** to the Dhamma, the Buddha states very clearly:

‘Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo’, meaning - well expounded is the Dhamma by the Buddha. Then what are the characteristics of this Dhamma? The Buddha said, ‘The Dhamma is sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko, ehipassiko’. Ehipassiko - means it can invite you to come and investigate this Dhamma and because it is the Truth, it will stand up to investigation. And when it stands up to investigation, your **faith in the Buddha** and His **Teaching** will become **very strong**. Unshakable! That's how it becomes **Bala** or **spiritual powers** and it will drive you to cultivate even more **seriously**. That's how this

Viriya comes to be because you know this is the way, for you have investigated into it and what the Buddha taught/said was very true.

Dhammapada verses 1 & 2, 21, 22 & 23; Dhammapada verse 183, - they are all so beautiful. And the whole Teaching, the 4 Noble Truths, the 3 Evil Roots, - they are all so meaningful and beautiful. They all stand up to investigation. That's why it will spur you on. You will **bring forth** the **very strong spiritual zeal** to **cultivate**. Then when your spiritual zeal is there, it will **drive you to be mindful**, to **stabilize** that mindfulness. That's how your mind develops the next factor of enlightenment.

After Viriya what is the next enlightenment factor? Ah, Yes! You will experience Pīti. Pīti is spiritual rapture, spiritual joy or spiritual calmness borne of mindfulness without thought. It is a very different type of mind, with no hindrance. That's why the Buddha continued, He said:

When Enlightenment Factor of Pīti is present he understands I've the Enlightenment Factor of Pīti. When the Enlightenment Factor of Pīti is absent he understands.

Can you all remember? I used to give you all a very important advice. What is it?

'Whenever you are **unhappy, miserable** and **not peaceful**, the evil roots are there'. Remember?

That's why this meditative experience is the opposite! Whenever the enlightenment factors of sati, dhammavicaya, vīriya and pīti are there, **the mind is full of joy** which is **pīti**. What does it mean? It means you are on the **right path**. You have the enlightenment factors that can set the base for you to become enlightened!

That is the reason why if during and after meditation you are only interested in asking Bro. Teoh about your meditation progress without this above understanding then you are just being **gullible**. My advice is when you meditate, **just silent your mind** and **don't try to know**. But most cultivators' minds are doing the opposite - **trying to know** whether they have done it correctly or not? Asking question like – if I do like that, is it correct? Or 'Is this meditative experience equivalent to what Nana or Jhana?' And they are just too keen to report their meditation experiences such as, - I can see this, I can do this, I can see light, I can read mind, I can see my past life ... etc. What for? Because all these have no meaning when the **enlightenment factors** are still not there; you have not progressed. Yet you think you had done well via developing some fantastic or special meditation.

You come out from retreat, you said you experience something, - like you can see light, you got pīti, sukha etc. So what? These are only the various types of **mind states (meditative experiences)** and **not wisdom**. There is only one enlightenment factor, which is pīti. You haven't developed the other 6 Factors of Enlightenment. Even

with pīti, it's only a sign of slight progress, but you cannot attach and cling on to that mind state of pīti. That is why when vīriya is there, it will drive you to cultivate until your sati is very stable, then pīti will arise naturally. Then when pīti arises, what must you do? You must not attach, you must be aware, and then you just **relax** into it. Can you understand? Relax is the 1st of the 4 supports for awareness based meditation.

Then if you continue to relax and maintain silent, pīti will transform into sukha. But sukha is not an enlightenment factor. You **MUST NOT** attach or cling on to it. If you are cultivating direct or pure Vipassanā (mindfulness-based meditation) then you are okay, you won't get trapped. But if you cultivate energy fields, one-pointedness, ekaggatā or absorption meditation (samatha), you can get trapped in sukha because it's so blissful and your mind **is not a free mind** because the **mental hindrances** are **suppressed** by the concentration energy. This is the reason why you need to **continue to relax into it** and **let it be**, then sukha will transform into passaddhi. **Passaddhi** is the 5th enlightenment factor. Passaddhi is **the tranquility** of mind, **stillness of mind**. And that mind is so quiet, so peaceful and so still. That is the silent mind. That is the **meditative mind**.

Then the Buddha said:

'When this enlightenment factor of Passaddhi arises, it is there and you are aware. And because you are aware you will come to

understand how the **non-arisen** enlightenment factor of Passaddhi comes to be and how the completion by culture of the arisen enlightenment factor of Passaddhi comes to be.

You will then understand and know that Passaddhi is there. That's why if you cannot cultivate and meditate until you have realized the **silent mind**, you are **still far away** from enlightenment. Then when you have realized the **silent mind**, which is passaddhi, you still have to continue to relax into it **to stabilize** it and then **use it** to develop the **daily mindfulness** until it is so stable, until you **can have Samādhi in the midst of life**, not only in formal meditation. You must cultivate **until** your mindfulness is **so clear, so continuous** that there is Samādhi, there is strength, but still within **upacara samādhi** (access concentration) and not in **appana samādhi**. This is the real daily mindfulness samādhi.

Then from there on the enlightenment factor of Samādhi will arise. And when this enlightenment factor of Samādhi arises, you will have the ability to **In-sight** into phenomena **without** thought **to awaken** to the **universal characteristics** of **impermanence, suffering state** and **non-self or empty nature** (aniccam, dukkhāṃ & anattā). This can happen because with sati and samādhi, your mind **is collected** and **unwavering** hence it **can see things as they are** to **realize the Truth**.

With Samādhi in daily life, your mind will not stir; it will not react during every moment of sense experience, hence it can see things

as they are. It can understand **how your mind function**, how your mind becomes **entangled**. That's how you can develop the **wisdom to straighten your view** then you will awaken. Because the moment you awaken to the universal characteristics, you are not deluded by the **phenomenon world** of **consciousness** any more. You are not deluded by what you come **to perceive**, by what the mind comes **to experience**. When you understand their **universal characteristics** clearly, they lose their power to delude you. Then you will understand clearly what the Buddha meant by: Sabbe saṅkhāra aniccaṃ. That is, all of saṅkhāra or mental activities and states are like that, they come and they go. Like I used to tell you all – 'It's only a thought, how come it **has such power** over you?' And what is thought? **Thoughts** are **response to memories** and they are **impermanent**, they come and they go. They are **condition arising**, causal phenomena, hence **no reality**. Then why are you still **so gullible**? So **deluded**? Allowing it to have such power over you and **conditioning** your **mind to stir** and become **so miserable**. Then why do you still hold on to all your **wrong views** and **opinions** so **tenaciously**? Mainly because your views and opinions come from your **conditioning**, your wrong views and your belief system.

If you cannot see all these, - i.e. the **power** of thought **to divide**, **delude**, **deceive** and **create** all these **conditioning**, then you will be **trapped in thought**. You will not be able to **come out of it**, if you don't develop **sati** or **mindfulness** to be **mindful** of all these. If your **silent mind** is **not** stable, you cannot understand all these.

The moment you understand, you will straighten your view. Your inquiries will lead you to the following: - Why should I react? Why can't I just accept them for what they are, **based** on **understanding** and wisdom? Then like the Buddha said: 'Thing is just the way it is, cannot be otherwise'. If the condition is like that, situation will be like that. If you want to change, then **introduce appropriate** new conditions towards achieving or realizing it.

You cannot crave for it. You cannot deludedly try by crooked means to get it because there is this Law of Kamma. It will hit back. But if you follow the **Noble 8-Fold Path** and work towards **resolving** things or issues **amicably**, so that the conditions will arise for **only wholesomeness** to arise then there will be no more problem. That's how you cultivate. That is the reason why you **can invoke** the **power of merits, blessings** and your **perfections** to make the **appropriate aspirations** for you to realize your **good** and **noble wishes**.

By the power of all these wholesomeness, may it arise the causes and conditions for this nature of mine to develop such understanding; for it to overcome all the **karmic obstructions**, so that it can walk the Path of Dhamma beautifully without any karmic obstructions. These are the ways available because when you invoke the power of merits through Nature's Law to arise the causes and conditions, you **don't interfere**. You don't want to know how it happened. But because you are **so sincere**, you **have faith**, you **persevere**, the causes and conditions will arise and you will move.

Cultivation is **so simple**; you don't have to do all those **funny things**. Do you understand?

The most important things are your **faith**, your **sincerity** and your **perseverance**! It will pave the way for Dhamma to flow and this is **most** beautiful. That's how the whole of the cultivation of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment can become very easy. The moment you have **this ability to see things as they are** and **in-sight into phenomena**, you will awaken to the **3 universal characteristics** of nature (aniccam, dukkhāṃ & anattā). Then you will come to realize that **everything is just the way it is**. It's only a **phenomenon** world of **consciousness** with all their universal characteristics. No reality, not worthwhile clinging and holding. Then you are **no longer deluded**, no longer **deceived** by the phenomena world. Then everything is just the way it is, **you can accept them for what they are**. You can see through '**Suchness**', then your mind develops **Equanimity**, which is the **last** enlightenment factor, Upekkhā. Then you will come to know that your mind **does not stir anymore**. It **can accept** the reality of everything **within the moment** for what they are because these are **the realities of life and existence** within the **conditioned world**. This is "**What Is**". This is Nature, hence cannot be otherwise.

The form and mind that has no more craving will have no more suffering. The form and mind that has craving and want things their way will always has suffering. So this is the ultimate understanding borne of the 7th enlightenment factor of Equanimity or Upekkhā.

That's the reason why I always said, 'Don't try to do anything, don't try to crave for anything, and don't try to become anything'. Just **let things be**. Just make **full use** of this form and mind **to live life**, to **experience all the beauties** and **wonders of life**. And use it with understanding. Not to be **deluded** by it, not to cling on to it, not to hold on to it, **thinking that it is you!** That's why there is no more delusion. That's why the green book '**Who are you? What are you?**' is very important. Similarly the orange book on '**Defilement**' (**Sabba Āsava Sutta**) and the seminar paper on '**understanding life**' are all very important because they explain to you **clearly, what life is**; the **meaning** of life, the **purpose of life** and everything that you need to know about life.

Then the other books are on meditation, the transcript book dated 12 September 2013 etc. That's why all these things just come by themselves. We never plan for them, kalyanamittas just know how to help do up the transcripts of those talks, and then I edited them. Then it comes about and become beautiful Dhamma books. By now you should have enough dhamma to help you all develop the cultivation.

The next two sutra that we are going to study are the Diamond Sutra and The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra. They are the higher Teachings for Great beings that really want to cultivate to become Sammasambuddha. It's not difficult. The Bodhisattva way can be realized for there are causes and conditions for it. That's why kalyāṇamittas requested for it and it's just

happened and everything just falls in place. I never **initiated** anything, but it just happened because the time has come, **conditions** have arisen. At first I intend to do it after my May trip. The **whole of May** I'll be **travelling most** of the time, I'll be going for a **cruise holiday** to visit **Europe, United Kingdom** and the **Mediterranean countries**, so I'll be away. Today is your **last Sunday class** because **next Sunday** is the **house dāna** at Christina's house. Then on the 4th May I'll have to fly to London. 1st May is a holiday, 2nd and 3rd May is a Saturday and a Sunday respectively. Sunday is **Wesak Day**, so we don't have class; we will have a break, which is **beautiful**. Then after that when I come back only I am supposed to start the class but some kalyāṇamittas couldn't wait. They asked when we are starting the Diamond Sutra class. I promised them this Tuesday. That's why if you all can make it, it's **very important** to attend because this Diamond Sutra is **very unique** and **very powerful**. Sister Eng Bee please helps pass the message to **Brother Swee Aun** and **Mee Fong** and **advise them to attend** the **1st Diamond Sutra class** if they can make it. These are the conditions that have arisen.

3.2.4.5 Dhammānupassanā 5th Category Of Practice – Mindfulness Of The Four Noble Truths

I have finished the cultivation on mindfulness of the 7 Factors of Enlightenment of the 4th foundation of mindfulness. We shall now move on to the last cultivation which is on **mindfulness of the 4 Noble Truths**. Before we do that is there any question? If not we will continue with the last category of practice on mindfulness of

Dhamma (Dhammānupassanā) then after that we end. The last category is **mindfulness** of the **4 Noble Truths**, which is on page 50:

And further O Bhikkhu, a bhikkhu lives contemplating dhamma in the Dhamma of the 4 Noble Truths. How O Bhikkhu, does a bhikkhu live contemplating dhamma in the Dhamma of the 4 Noble Truths? Here O Bhikkhu, a bhikkhu understands this is suffering, **according to reality**, he understands.

(Listen, this is the **3 turnings** of the 4 Noble Truths. **According to reality** here means not according to your **concept, idea** and **Dhamma knowledge**. That is you have already developed the understanding of **what suffering is** because **suffering is to be understood according to reality** as per the 2nd turning wisdom. Then **suffering has been understood** as per the 3rd turning wisdom.)

He understands this is the **origin** of suffering **according to reality**, he understands. This is the **cessation** of suffering **according to reality**, he understands. This is the **path** that leads to the **cessation of suffering** (which is the Noble 8-Fold Path (again) **according to reality**, he understands. Thus he lives contemplating dhamma in Dhamma **internally** or he lives contemplating dhamma in Dhamma **externally** and he lives contemplating dhamma in Dhamma **both internally and externally**.

If you study this Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta based on what is written here in the text, chances are you cannot understand what it means because

what is written here is **only a very brief summary**. The whole of **the 3 turnings of the 4 Noble Truths is summarized into just one paragraph**. The summary did not even highlight the **3 turnings of the 4 Noble Truths** so how are you going to understand it?

The sutta said, 'This is suffering, **according to reality**' – what does it mean? It means all the 3 turnings you have already done it. What is the 1st turning? The Buddha proclaimed the 1st Noble Truth: Birth, old age, sickness and death are suffering; Separation from loved ones and prized possession is suffering; when you are with people whom you don't like is suffering; when you cannot get what you want, expectations in life are not met, that is suffering. In short, through your delusion, sakkāya-diṭṭhi or **self-delusion**, you grasp and cling onto the **5 aggregates of form and mind**, the **5 grasping aggregates** or the **5 ūpādānakkhandha - they are suffering (dukkha)**. That's the 1st turning **according to reality**.

Then the 2nd turning, the Buddha said, 'This noble truth of suffering is to be understood, **according to reality**'. You must understand what they are! That's why you have to reflect, contemplate and inquire, one by one. Why did the Buddha say this? How can I develop the understanding?

Then what is the 3rd turning? 'This noble truth of dukkha has already been understood **according to reality**'.

The 2nd noble truth is the same. In the 1st turning He proclaimed the Truth, 'The cause of suffering is craving'. Then under the 2nd turning, the Buddha said, 'This cause which is craving is to be abandoned or severed'. Then the 3rd turning, 'The cause of suffering which is craving has already been abandoned'. That's why **according to reality** you have done it.

The 3rd Noble Truth is all about enlightenment in the here and the now. The Buddha said, 'Suffering need not be if there is wisdom. Cessation of suffering which is Nibbāna in the here and the now can be realized; Nibbāna, is to be realized; Nibbāna has been realized'.

Then for the 4th Noble Truth it is the same. 1st turning is: proclamation of the Truth regarding the Noble 8-Fold Path by the Buddha. 2nd turning is: This Noble 8-Fold Path, the Path that leads to the end of all suffering (which is the meditation), is to be cultivated. Then the 3rd turning is: This Noble 8-Fold Path has been cultivated.

That's why if you have not developed the understanding of the 3 turnings of the 4 Noble Truths, you cannot understand. Then after that it said:

Thus he lives contemplating dhamma in Dhamma of the 4 Noble Truths internally or he lives contemplating dhamma in Dhamma of the 4 Noble Truths externally.

What does this mean? You will see the 4 Noble Truths arising and passing away within your form and mind. How did the Noble Truths (one by one), allow you to understand how you are conditioned into suffering and then later allow you to develop the wisdom to liberate your mind from suffering after understanding the cause? Then when you understand yourself, you understand others. You will see how others **also suffer**, how they go through **old age, sickness and death**. How others **suffer when they are hit by separation from loved ones** and **their choice possessions**, (either through death or separation via divorce and relationship failure, or various other possibilities like nature's disaster, calamities etc) and when they are with people whom they don't like. You will also witness how they become **miserable** and how they are **afflicted**, when there is **no wisdom** due to their **lack of understanding** of this Noble Teaching of Lord Buddha. So all these you will see them **arising internally** within your own form and mind, and then **later externally** within **others form and mind**. Then later on He said,

He lives contemplating this Dhamma in Dhamma of the 4 Noble Truths both internally and externally.

Then you start to see the **whole world** is full of **suffering**, the **prevalence of suffering**. Without wisdom, suffering is everywhere. That's how **real compassion** and **mettā** can arise. That's how he developed the **vows** to continue to cultivate that way, - to **relieve all living beings from suffering**, to **take across all living beings**, to be

free from all suffering. All these as you cultivate, you will develop the understanding.

‘Then he lives contemplating the origination factor of Dhamma or he lives contemplating the dissolution factor of Dhamma or he lives contemplating both the origination factor and dissolution factor of Dhamma, and his mindfulness is established with the understanding that Dhamma exist to the extent necessary for **understanding** and he lives independent and clings on to naught in the world’. Thus indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating dhamma in the Dhamma of the 4 Noble Truths.

That’s why the Dhamma is like a raft, you don’t hold on to it after that. The Dhamma is like a pointer that points towards the Truth and directs you to cultivate. Then you don’t hold on to Dhamma because the Truth is not the pointer. The Diamond Sutra also emphasized on this point very clearly.

That’s how the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta comes to an end. When you have completed the mindfulness of the 4 Noble Truths cultivation you will surely become enlightened. Then the assurance of attainment was also stated by the Buddha in the sutta:

Verily, O bhikkhu, should any person **maintain** the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for 7 years then by him one of two fruitions is proper to be expected. Knowledge here and the now or if

some form of clinging is yet present, the state of a Non-Returner, which is the 3rd stage of the Supra mundane Fulfillment.

That's to become an Anāgāmī. Then he continued:

O bhikkhu, let alone 7 years, should a person maintain this 4 Foundations of Mindfulness cultivation in this manner for 6 years... 5 years... 4 years ... 3 years ... 2 years ... 1 year, then by him again, one of two fruitions is proper to be expected; Knowledge here and the now or if some form of clinging is yet present, the state of a Non-Returner or an Anāgāmī.

Then he continued:

O bhikkhu, let alone 1 year, should any person or cultivator maintains this 4 Foundations of Mindfulness cultivation in this manner for 7 months, then by him again, one of two fruitions is proper to be expected; Knowledge here and now or if some form of clinging is yet present, the state of a Non-Returner or an Anāgāmī.

O bhikkhu, let alone 7 months, should any person maintains this 4 Foundations of Mindfulness cultivation in this manner for 6 months... 5 months... 4 months... 3 months... 2 months... 1 month... even half a month, (That's why you only need 2 weeks not too long) then by him, one of two fruitions is proper to be expected; Knowledge in the here and the now or if some form of clinging is yet present, the state of a Non-Returner or an Anāgāmī.

Then he continued:

O bhikkhu, let alone half a month, should any cultivator maintain this 4 Foundations of Mindfulness cultivation in this manner for 1 week, (Wah - only one week or 7 days only, so easy eh?) then by him, one of two fruitions is proper to be expected; Knowledge in the here and now or if some form of clinging is yet present, the state of a Non-Returner or an Anāgāmi. Because of this was it said: This is the only way, O bhikkhu, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the realization of Nibbāna, namely, the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness. Thus spoke the Blessed One. Satisfied, the bhikkhu approved of his words.

3.3 Brother Teoh's Closing Remarks

Now we end and shall we rejoice. Sādhū! Sādhū! Sādhū!

It has been a great sutta. The 4 Foundations of Mindfulness so clearly explained. This sutta **is not easy** and you **seldom** hear of **this type of explanation** because the **real cultivation** is not what people think. During the early years, I **investigated** into it, and finally when I understood its importance, I just moved into it without turning back. I **realized** that they are all **connected, interrelated** and the teachings are **so important** and so **powerful**. But **it depends on your past**; if you **had cultivated before**, you will save a lot of time. You **don't**

have to be gullible. That's why **you must avoid all karmic obstructions** whenever possible.

Don't be **too gullible** and **too eager** to do things. When you're not sure, please try not to do anything. If you're too eager, you will get yourself **entangled unnecessarily** because when you're not ready and you think you're ready then you can get into trouble. That is, when you meet up with the wrong group and you think that is the **correct practice**, then you go and **promote it**, you go and **make donation** to it and you go and do all those **gullible** things. Then what happens is - if you yourself haven't **put it to test** and you yourself haven't developed the **proper understanding**, you're **not sure** so **you only believe**. Then you will become gullible. Then if that's **not** the true way, it can become **serious karmic obstruction**. Over the last 10 years plus of dhamma sharing with kalyanamittas I realized that there are many **very sincere cultivators** around who have **karmic obstructions** that obstruct them from receiving the **true dhamma**. But you don't have to worry because **as long as you ask for forgiveness**, it will come to pass; provided you do it **sincerely** with **understanding**.

The other way to break or overcome this karmic obstruction is via understanding and cultivating the Diamond Sutra. Can you all remember Sakyamuni Buddha's Cinca incident, etc? A lot of these great cultivators, because of their past delusion and ignorance, they also did all these things that caused their karmic obstructions to be there.

Do you know that it was clearly stated in this Diamond Sutra, that if you have this karmic obstruction, this sutta **can help you break it**. And it really works because it is part of nature's law. This sutta said, as you cultivate this sutta you will develop the understanding and you will share your understanding with others. Then if there is someone who has karmic negativity, come along and disturb you (according to that sutta), your karmic obstruction will be all gone! Straight away it will disappear! Then after that, you will be able to develop the causes and conditions to become Sammasambuddha. The whole highway ("Chéng Fó Dà Dào" 成佛大道) will be liked clear for you. That's why it said: these are the conditions for overcoming such karmic obstructions. When you had developed that type of understanding and perfection and then if someone come along and does this to you, it means you already paid back your karmic debt.

Because this sutta is so powerful the Buddha actually spoke about his own perfection of patience (or Khanti in Pāḷi), when he was an ascetic as an analogy for us to develop the understanding. Can you all remember that jataka story? He met the King of Kalinga, who later became Koṇḍañña. The Buddha said if he has not cultivated the Diamond Sutra understanding of no mark of any self or any living being and dhamma, during the perfection of patience at that time; - when the King takes apart all his 4 limbs, the limbs will never come back to him if he has got any thought of a mark then. Do you

know what a mark is? Like the whole white board, you put a small mark there. Not a stain, it's just a very small mark, denoting the very subtle defilement. Even the **mark of non-self** is a mark. Can you all understand? Mark of having living beings to save is also a mark. The 'mark', which is no mark! That's why when you go for examination, conventionally you want 100 marks. But spiritually No mark is the best, because zero mark means empty. That's why when you do charity with **a mark of a person doing it**, that merit is not a pure merit because it is done with a mark of a self or out of greed for the merit which is also a mark. Wait until I start the Diamond Sutra class, this coming Tuesday; it will be very interesting because it is a very powerful sutra.

Ah, I think it is just nice, almost 4.30pm, shall we finish. Oh! So we still have 5 more minutes, do you all have any more questions?

4 Questions and Answers

4.1 *Question 1 – On meaning of 'completion by culture'*

Question 1 by Sister Eng Bee: What is the meaning of the words, 'completion by culture?'

Bro. Teoh: Completion by culture means you have understood it perfectly. It's like our Chinese culture, e.g. Cheng-Beng, we will know what to do; similarly for Chinese New Year too. It means you have understood the Chinese culture. So it is the same here, they used the words, 'perfection by culture' to mean you have

understood your cultivation. You understood how the **enlightenment factors** come to be. It means you are **very familiar** with the **enlightenment factors**. How does it arise? How it is always with you? That's why the 'completion by culture', means you have cultured it, you **have cultivated** it. Do you understand? It's like your culture; you have understood it; meaning no need to remember, isn't it? Take for example, during new moon day and full moon day of the lunar month, Chinese New Year and Winter Solstice (冬至), etc. when people mention Winter Solstice, straight away you know what month it is already. So you are already very familiar with all these, because it's your culture; so completion by culture means you have perfected it until you had understood it so clearly.

That's why the whole of meditation is not what people think. In the early days, I sometimes heard people said, 'Oh I don't need to cultivate Kāyānupassanā; I don't need to cultivate Vedanānupassanā; I can straight away go to the mind and cultivate Cittānupassanā' because they said they can 'see' mind. I just kept quiet then. After that somebody else said, 'Mind or cittanupassana also no need to cultivate, we can go direct to Dhammānupassanā which is even more powerful!' Do you think it's so easy to develop the cultivation?

Sati, the 1st enlightenment factor is **also not yet established** and you want to go to **Dhammānupassanā direct**, or go to **Mind direct!** The very likely reason being, they **use thought**, they **never use sati!** That's why the whole cultivation is not what you think. Kāyānupassanā is a must! If you cannot be mindful of your Kāya,

then how can you develop Sati? Your **thoughts are way ahead** of **your actions**. If you don't believe me, you can check it up. **Throughout the day you think a lot**. Your thought is far ahead of your action. Take for example, when you think with the intention to go to the toilet or wash room, - as you walk you are **not aware** of how you walk, at the same time you think some more! The **thought proliferate** and **continue**. And **throughout the day** you are **so heedless** - **busy thinking, planning, worrying** and **complaining** about life. You are **seldom** with the **moment**, that I can tell you; you can go and check it up. Only true cultivators **can be with the moment, most** of the time. When you are with the moment, you are **just aware!**

Why are you in a hurry? Thinking so fast - for what? Haven't think enough for the last 50-60 years? You have been Heedless for so long and yet you still want to continue doing that? Ha! X3 - **Alicia laughed!** She can understand very clearly now because she went through that earlier on. That's why a lot of these things are not what people think. Today's sharing - make sure it's recorded! Eh? You better check again. If this is not recorded then it is really gone! Maybe meant to be.

(After checking, it was confirmed that this Dhamma sharing was recorded).

Okay, very good, sādhu! We should thank Miss Lee. Please don't touch it; if it's recorded don't touch it because I cannot repeat all these sharing, it just come with the conditions.

4.2 *Question 2 – On cultivation of Sammāsati*

Question 2 by Sister Eng Bee: Bro. Teoh, I remembered you mentioned to us before that this Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta cultivation only covers 1 part of the Noble 8-Fold Path cultivation. That is the Sammāsati path factor cultivation which is the number 7th path factor of the Noble 8-Fold Path. But after we go through this sutta, at the last part, it was mentioned:

‘This is the only way, O bhikkhu, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the realization of Nibbāna, namely, the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness.’

And because the 5th category of cultivation of Dhammānupassanā is mindfulness of the 4 Noble Truths, where as the 4 Noble Truths also cover the Noble 8-Fold Path. So it's not necessary that this sutta only teach us how to cultivate Sammāsati right?

Bro. Teoh: You have to understand it this way. I know what your question is, why are you driving the question that way? I had already explained it before in many of our earlier sharing. You see, the problem with people, the cultivators is, they said, ‘The Buddha said this is the **only way**....’, so if I cultivate the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness, then it's enough’. You **cannot blame** them for saying that because they quote the Buddha and they said ‘The Buddha said, this is the **only way**...’, so what do you think they will do? They will

just do or cultivate **mindfulness** of these 4 things. And it will be **worst** if the mindfulness or Sati they do; they also **do not understand**. Then do you know what the last foundation of mindfulness is? It is **Dhammānupassanā** and the last of the 5 categories of practices is **mindfulness of the 4 Noble Truths** which is **so scantily summarized in the sutta!** Unless you finished the cultivation of the whole of the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness including the last category of the cultivation of Dhammānupassanā, i.e. mindfulness of the 4 Noble Truths, with its **complete understanding** of the **3 turnings**, then the answer to your question is yes, because it covers the **Noble 8-Fold Path** cultivation, but how many people can understand that?

That's why in order to prevent confusion, I had always said, this is **Sammāsati only**, one of the Noble 8-Fold Path factor only. After that you have **to cultivate Right View** that conditions Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood (Living) and Right Effort; then the **real Sati and Samādhi**. If you don't go through the **3 turnings of the 4 Noble Truths** to cultivate the **Noble 8-Fold Path** of Right View, etc., then you should ask: what type of enlightenment is it? Because you are still so crude, with your understanding of the Nature's Law that governs all life and existence. It means you don't have right view. You only believe and think you know. Then you need Right View to condition the appropriate Right Speech, right action etc. But you don't have right speech, because you didn't cultivate the appropriate right view leading to the right thought and right speeches etc. And when you don't have Right Thought, Right

speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood, you are still **so crude** in the way you **communicate** with people, in the way you **act, think** and **arise your thoughts**. So what type of enlightenment is that? In order to prevent **complacency** and **confusion**, that is the reason why I always said it's only one of the Path factors. And the Buddha is never wrong. Hope you understand?

It's just like Right Effort, remember? Towards the end of the cultivation, there **is no effort**; it's just Sati, **mindfulness** leading to **heedfulness**. Just like what J Krishnamurti said, '**Wherever there is effort, there is no Meditation**'. But if you quote the Buddha, by saying that 'The Noble 8-Fold Path as taught by the Buddha, has the Right Effort path factor, and you said **no need effort**'. Then what will happen? Ah they will **argue** with you. It depends on **your understanding** because that right effort cultivation is for the thought. That's why the Buddha taught, the 1st Right Effort is **to abandon** the **unwholesome thought** that has arisen. For thought, you **can use** effort but when it comes to **Mindfulness** of the 4 Foundations, you **don't use** effort. Can you understand? And **Vīriya** is **not** effort! Vīriya, is **spiritual zeal or tenacity**. That's why the 2 Pāli words are different. Right Effort is **Sammāvayama**, whereas this **spiritual zeal** is **Vīriya**. But the problem with English translation is, they go and translate Vīriya as Effort. And they put it very clearly in the translation as Right Effort. There was one case, actually a very shocking one, is the author who wrote the book, "See you in Nibbāna" and I saw him translating Vīriya as Right Effort. The 2 Pāli words are different and yet it was translated that way, because the

author used the English word to interpret their meaning. It is not about right and wrong here because the author is just the way he is; when his understanding is like that, he will do things like that.

That's why in order to avoid all these confusion and misunderstanding, it's important to let people know that the whole cultivation involves the **complete** cultivation of the **Noble 8-Fold Path**. If you understand that the last category of cultivation within Dhammānupassanā is **mindfulness of the 4 Noble Truths** then you **make sure** you understand what the cultivation is i.e. it involves the **cultivation of the 3 turnings** of the **4 Noble Truths**. In the sutta it was **summarized so scantily** and the only **very profound** words they used are: to understand it "**according to reality**". If you **missed** and **don't understand** those words, then you are gone. Do you understand? And you still think you know! That's why **Dhamma** is **very difficult** to **understand** when there is **no clear explanation** and **understanding**. And the **true Dhamma** is very **profound**. **It's simple** but it's **very profound**. Simple to those who understand, profound because not many people understand, very few people understand. So do you understand now? Simple to those who can understand but in this world there are very few who understand. That **concludes** what you need to understand because to me the **Dhamma is really simple**. The Buddha has repeated his important messages and advices all over the sutta. Stressing to you all, everywhere, the **importance** of **Sati** and **Heedfulness**! And human beings are very funny; they **don't even want to know what Sati is**. They straight away want to go into **Vipassanā, nana** and **jhāna**

cultivation via all those big words. Then they like to quote the Heart Sutra, Diamond Sutra, The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra, etc including **Prajna Pāramitā Sutta** but at the end of the day, the **basic essential Dhamma** they also cannot understand and the basic 1st enlightenment factor of **Sati**, also they **don't have**.

And may I ask you one very simple question? How can you develop the cultivation when you don't even know what Sati is? Knowing what Sati is, is only the **beginning** or **first stage**. And then **developing Sati** is the second stage. After you have developed the Sati, you still have to **stabilize it** and then **use it to cultivate** the **daily mindfulness** and the **Noble 8-Fold Path in daily life**. This is putting what has been understood into practice in daily life. This **daily mindfulness cultivation** is just the beginning of the **real meditation** and **cultivation**. And if you think you had already cultivated 30, 40 years of formal meditation (going in and out of so many retreats) and you think you already understood the dhamma, then, good luck to you! The reason being, the **real meditation** is the **daily mindfulness** to **maintain heedfulness** in the **midst of life** to awaken.

It is to let living beings understand that this is what the Buddha advised. And if you can't even see all these advice or messages that he had stated in the sutta, then it's too bad. That's why when you don't have the **clarity** of the whole picture or jigsaw puzzle of the whole cultivation, there is **no way** you can teach and share the **true dhamma**. Because you yourself are in a **maze**, you yourself also

cannot see, you yourself are also doing piece by piece of the jigsaw puzzle without much understanding. You do one essential Dhamma here, and then you do another essential dhamma over there. Then you practice all the various methods and techniques of meditation and you think that is meditation because you learn all these **popularly accepted** methods and techniques of meditation from other people. You become more gullible when you keep on doing these methods and techniques, **without** understanding what they are and why you do. Mainly because you don't have a clear picture of what the whole Teaching is all about. All the essential Dhammas, they are all **inter-connected**. And your focus should be **very simple**, because the Buddha already mentioned in his Appamada vāga (Dhammapada verse 21): that you **only need** to have one quality of mind which is **HEEDFULNESS** then you **are destined** for enlightenment! Dhammapada verse 22 confirmed that further via saying:

Distinctly understand the big difference between heedlessness and heedfulness. The wise intend on heedfulness. And because they do that, they will rejoice in the realm of the Ariyas.

So you only need to be **heedful**, isn't it? **Is that so difficult?** It's not difficult because to be heedful is actually very simple. But with that heedfulness, there is still a lot more work to do. You still need to use it **to cultivate** the **Noble 8-Fold Path**. And that cultivation is not easy to understand because within the Noble 8-Fold Path, there is the 4 Noble Truths. Everything is inside there because the **Right View**

path factor also has the **right view** with regards to the **4 Noble Truths**.

1st Right View is Law of Kamma, 2nd one is Law of Mind and the 3rd one is Law of Dhamma. The 1st category of Dhamma you have to understand is **the 4 Noble Truths**, and that is a **very important** Right View. The 4 Noble Truths is also the **essence of the Buddha's teaching**. That's why the first and the last, they have the 4 Noble Truths. That's why you must complete at least the first and the last, then the in between is automatic. But when you don't have clarity, you cannot see the Teaching. The message is so clear but like I said, simple for those who understand but difficult for those who cannot understand. And in this world, there are very few who understand. And that is where the problem lies. It has been a beautiful session thus far. Shall we rejoice? - Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu!

Are there any more questions? If you don't have then you all can **meditate**. Ah yes Chwee, - please pass the microphone to Chwee.

4.3 *Question 3 – On assurance of attainment*

Question 3 by Sister Chwee: Sorry Bro. Teoh, because I am a little bit not too good at it. The assurance of attainment is listed here as 7 years. But in actual fact to me when I look at it, it's more likely to be 7 life times. Or, if it is 7 years then it is like fast track, right?

Bro. Teoh: No, as stated in the sutta, 7 years is the longest.

4.4 *Question 4 – On 7 human lives*

Question 4 by Sister Chwee: What about this thing regarding maximum 7 human lives; where is this coming from?

Bro. Teoh: That one is different. As a Sotāpanna (stream winner), if you are **very contented** with life then you can choose to stay on as a **Sotāpanna** like King Sakka for 7 more lives maximum. According to the Buddha if you are already a Sotāpanna then maximum 7 births within the sensual realm, you will realize Arahantship. So you can take your time, because it's already destined and you will definitely become enlightened. So if you want to be a bit 'playful', then don't progress so fast; even though 7 years is the longest. If you have already realized Sotāpannaship, after 1 week, then you can take your time because you can come back 7 more lives instead of realizing Arahantship straight away in that life.

4.5 *Question 5 – Continuation on assurance of attainment*

Question 5 by Sister Chwee: Can I ask another question?

Bro. Teoh: Wait, before I forget, you better get this properly understood so that you don't simply quote me via saying, 'Bro. Teoh said maximum 7 years so we still have a lot of time left'. Here 7 years means 7 years of **continuous practice** with **understanding** of what this **4 Foundations of Mindfulness** practices is all about. Can you understand? That is, you are **throughout the day ever mindful**

and **heedful**. And you **cultivate** starting from Kāyānupassanā, then Vedanānupassanā, Cittānupassanā and Dhammānupassanā ... internally and externally. Nobody takes more than 7 years, if they really do it this way. Most of them can do quite fast and they don't need 7 years because 7 years is too long.

There were two 7-year old Arahants during the Buddha's time. One of them is Samanera Pandita who attained arahatship on the eighth day after becoming a novice at the age of 7. (Ref. Dhammapada verse 80). Another one is Samanera Sumana who was a pupil of Thera Anuruddha. Although he was only seven years old he was already an arahant. (Ref. Dhammapada verse 382).

Samanera Pandita could be the Teacher of Tucco Pothila, the Venerable Empty Scripture monk during the time of the Buddha. Pandita was a young son of a rich man of Savatthi. He became a samanera at the age of seven. On the eighth day after becoming a samanera, as he was following Thera Sariputta on an alms-round, he saw some farmers channeling water into their fields and asked the Thera, "Can water which has **no consciousness** be **guided** to wherever one wishes?" The Thera replied, "Yes, it can be guided to wherever one wishes." As they continued on their way, the samanera next saw some **fletchers heating** their arrows with fire and **straightening them**. Further on, he came across some carpenters cutting, sawing and planning timbers to make it into things like cart-wheels. Then he pondered, "If water which is without consciousness can be guided to wherever one desires; if a

crooked bamboo which is **without consciousness** can be **straightened**, and if timber which is **without consciousness** can be made into **useful things**, why should I, **having consciousness**, be unable **to tame my mind** and **practise Tranquillity and Insight Meditation?**"

Then and there he asked permission from the Thera and returned to his own room in the monastery. There **he ardently and diligently practised meditation**, contemplating the body. Sakka and the devas also helped him in his meditation by keeping the monastery and its precincts **very quiet and still**. Before meal time Samanera Pandita attained **Anāgāmī Fruition**.

At that time Thera Sariputta was bringing food to the samanera. The Buddha saw with his supernormal power that Samanera Pandita had attained Anāgāmī Fruition and also that if he continued to practise meditation he would soon attain arahatship. So the Buddha decided to stop Sariputta from entering the room, where the samanera was. The Buddha went to the door and kept Sariputta engaged by putting some questions to him. While the conversation was taking place, the samanera attained arahatship. Thus, the samanera attained arahatship on the eighth day after becoming a novice.

That Samanera Pandita, if I'm not wrong could be Thera Sariputta's brother. Thera Sariputta's mother gave birth to many Arahants. She must have had good parami because to be able to become a mother who can give birth to even one Arahant, her parami is already in

abundance! Sometimes it is an advantage to be a mother. After undergoing so many eon and eon of birth and death, you only need one life, to give birth to an Arahant or a Bodhisattva then it is like you strike lottery. But make sure you are a good mother. If you are not a good mother then too bad because this condition can cut both ways. But most of the time if they choose to become parent or mother of such great beings, they are sure to have beautiful parami because these beings they know. Yes, Alicia, please push the button of the microphone up.

4.6 *Question 6 – On path factors*

Question 6 by Sister Alicia: Bro. Teoh, you were saying just now, the 4th Noble Truths, the 1st path factor is Right View, and the last one... Can you elaborate a little bit?

Bro. Teoh: You mean Sammāsati? Sorry, it is not the last one; it is the 7th path factor. The 8th or last path factor is Sammāsamādhī. But the last two, they are **connected** in the cultivation.

The 1st path factor is **Right View** and there are 3 aspects of it. The 1st right view is with regards to **Kamma Niyāma** (Law of Karma); - this is a Nature's Law/Spiritual Law that governs all of **life and existence**. Then the second one is **Citta Niyāma**. Citta Niyāma is the nature's law that governs the **operations of Mind** and our entire **mind states** they follow the **law of Dependent Origination** or **paṭicca-samuppāda**. The 3rd Right View is **Dhamma Niyāma**, which means

the Nature's Order on Truth. The most important truth is the **4 Noble Truths** because that's the **essence of the Buddha's Teaching**. So that's the reason why when you have that Right View, you **would have cultivated** the **4 Noble Truths**. Then you would have understood the **whole Teaching**. It will condition your Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood (Living) and Right Effort; then you have **Right Mindfulness**. Within the mindfulness path factor you have the **4 foundations of mindfulness cultivation**. The 4th foundation is Dhammānupassanā. The last category of cultivation of Dhammānupassanā is **mindfulness** of the **4 Noble Truths**. So now you can see that both of them have the 4 Noble Truths cultivation.

Sorry about the earlier mistake. It should be the 1st and the 7th path factors and not the 1st and the last. Any more question?

'SALEMCUT' is a good skilful means to help us remember the Noble 8-Fold Path factors:

- U – Denotes Understanding (Right View/Right Understanding)
- T – Denotes Thought (Right Thought)
- S – Denotes Speech (Right Speech)
- A – Denotes Action (Right Action)
- L – Denotes Living/Livelihood (Right Living)
- E – Denotes Effort (Right Effort)
- M – Denotes Mindfulness (Right Mindfulness)
- C – Denotes Collectedness of mind (Right Samādhi)

In Mandarin, it is called 八正道.

4.7 Question 7 – On reality

Question 7 by Sister Chwee: Can I ask another question? This thing about reality, '**according to reality**', can you just refresh us a bit on what is the meaning of reality?

Bro. Teoh: Reality is whatever that can explain the way things are. Can you all follow? Whatever that can explain the way things are, is the Reality, is the Truth. That's why the **essential Teaching** or the **essence** of the **Buddha's Teaching** is the **4 Noble Truths**. These are Truth that **points towards the Reality**. And the Buddha said the 1st Noble Truth is the Noble Truth of Dukkha or Suffering. It means this is a noble truth that points towards the Truth of Suffering. Then he explains clearly in the proclamation, what constitutes suffering? He said there are **8 realities** in life and existence - when you **confront them without wisdom suffering will arise**. And what are these 8 realities?

He said, each and every living being, not only human being, if they lives long enough they will confront them. The first 4 are: **birth, old age, sickness and death**. Do you agree that these are realities which every living being has to go through? You have to experience them isn't it?

Then separation from your loved ones or possessions, whether through divorce, death or whatever means can be rather traumatic.

And there are also a lot of **relationship failure** due to misunderstanding, arguments, etc that can lead to separation too.

Then when you are with people whom you don't like - this is another reality that can bring about suffering.

When you cannot get what you want, this is another reality. When your expectations are not met, when you want things your way, which is not nature's way, you will suffer.

Then in short, he summarized all of suffering as your **attachments** to the 5 aggregates of form and mind, which is the human being and its thought process. The **self-delusion**, that **conditions** the **grasping** and **clinging** will bring about suffering and this is the reality of this form and mind. That's why this form and mind is not you. That's why he said, don't grasp, don't cling, and don't be deluded by it.

If you read my green book with the title, 'Who are you? What are you?' you will understand then you will know how to **use it** (this form and mind) and not to be **deluded** by it. It was also stated in the Diamond Sutra, - 'Can a Sotāpanna, after he has become a Sotāpanna, have a thought that he is a Sotāpanna?' No way, the Buddha said. Unless he is **a fake one**, do you understand? The fake ones, **their ego** are very strong and they will tell you, 'I am already a Sotāpanna, I had already broken through the first 3 fetters, I have no more rites and rituals, I have understood sakkāya-diṭṭhi (self delusion); this is not me, not self'. All these are what they will

believe in. But if they really achieved and realized, of course we will rejoice! And Sādhu them, but it is not so easy.

So these are the **realities of life and existence** which all living beings **have to confront**, said the Buddha. That's why he can summarize to you, all of the realities of life **within the mundane conditioned arising world**. There is nothing within the mundane world that you experience via life that **is not** within the **1st Noble Truth's 8 realities**. You can go and check, because everything that arise in life, involved that form and mind. That's why the final summary covers everything. And the first 7 realities also cover almost everything. Then finally the 4th Noble Truth and the 3rd Noble Truth – they are related to enlightenment and they cover the **supra mundane** aspect of life. That's why I said these 4 Noble Truths, which is the **essence** of the Buddha's Teaching, can explain to you clearly, the **secret of life**, all of **mundane** and **supra mundane aspects of life**. Who in this world or universe can have this understanding? Unless he is the real Sammā Sambuddha!

That is the reason why in the year 1971, the moment I read the **4 Noble Truths**, my '**nature**' told me, **no need to search** anymore, this is the **real one!** Because at that time it was very strange, my mind – from inside told me that even if I myself had become enlightened like the Buddha, there is no way that I can **summarize** all my **understandings** into just **4 Noble Truths**, so beautiful, so concisely and so clearly! That was how I came to the conclusion that he is the real one. After that there is **no more doubt** and **no more searching**.

I used to look at the sky, the stars, and then ask those questions: 'Who am I? What am I doing here? I am just a speck of dust in this universe – very insignificant'.

But living beings think that they are very great. We are just one of the 6 billion plus human beings on this planet Earth. And Earth is just one of the miserable 3rd furthest planets of this Solar System. And every star is a potential sun or bigger and within our galaxy (not the universe as yet), only our Milky Way there are **billions and billions of stars!** It means this whole universe is **so immense** just like what the Buddha said; 'The number of stars that are in the heaven are more than the sand in the Ganges River'. Do you know how long the Ganges River is? Do you know how much sand is there? Every sand one star, yet the numbers of stars are more than the sand of the Ganges River. Two thousand over years ago without any telescope especially the Hubble telescope, how can the Buddha know all these? That's why he is the Sammāsambuddha. That's why he is so wise; he has perfected himself through his cultivation. His Teaching is **so penetrative**. There is nothing about this universe that he cannot understand and explain to you. That's why I have **so much joy** when I came across the 4 Noble Truths. Then I knew - no need to search any more, that's it. Because this is the only Teaching that can explain to me all of life, both the **mundane and supra mundane**. And I don't have to search anywhere else. As a technical cum science student and a Civil Engineer I later realized that the Buddha's wisdom is really very fantastic! Ah wait till we start the

Diamond Sutra, then you will understand better because it's a very powerful sutta.

Ah, it's going to rain. Shall **we** rejoice one more time - **Sādhū! Sādhū! Sādhū!**

4.8 *Question 8 – On 7 years of continuous mindfulness*

Question 8 by Sister Chwee: You talked about 7 years of continuous mindfulness, - am I right? But let's say you do maybe 2 months or 2 years or whatever and then you stopped. When you come back again do you still have to do another 7 years?

Bro. Teoh: Okay, this is a very good question. I will give you one very simple example and you will understand. When the primitive men want to make fire, how do they do it? Ah they spin a stick or something hard against a rock, isn't it? Let's say you spin and spin until the spark is about to spark off and then you stopped. Then the next time when you start again, you have to start all over again, isn't it? Ah, in just the same way you have to start all over again! Before that spark comes, you are so complacent, understand or not? You are not serious, because this one needs **continuous mindfulness** and **heedfulness!** So before that spark comes and you stopped, the next time you have to start all over again. What happens when you do until it is about to spark off then it rains like now? Then how to spark? Ah the condition is not there, can you understand? Rains mean condition is not there. The worst is when you do until almost

can see the spark coming already, but before it can light the dry leave then it rains! What does it mean? Destructive kamma arise and it's gone, can you understand?

Sister Chwee: I asked that because Alicia and I were discussing whether or not we just do a bit then we come back to continue...

Bro. Teoh: You remind me of one person, during the early days, when I was in Brickfields temple. Let me share this with you, you will laugh at this one. It was in the year 1986; I think he was a layperson. He was teaching Vipassanā. Then I was nearby and I overheard what he told those students. He said 'Mindfulness is like that, you can accumulate it. If you **are mindful for one moment**, then another one moment, then **one day** when you **have accumulated enough of this mindfulness moments** or moments of mindfulness then you can **become enlightened**. Do you agree with his argument? When I heard that I just walked away because the moment he said that it means he does not understand what mindfulness is all about.

It's not how many moments of mindfulness you have accumulated. It is not like that. As long as you are **not continuous** in your mindfulness, **Sammāsati** cannot come about. That's why the Buddha said Ānāpānasati is **to train your mind to be aware** then **stabilize** it. That's why you have the **mind sweeping method to decondition** the **heedless thinking**, then the **Pūja** to **strengthen** your **spiritual faculties**. Then after that you train yourself in **Ānāpānasati to stabilize** your mindfulness. Then only you go into

the other categories of practices of Kāyānupassanā which is part of the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness cultivation.

Immediately after Ānāpānasati, you do **mindfulness** of the **4 Postures**, to **anchor** your mind, to be **aware**, to be **with** the moment. Then you do the **daily mindfulness, Sati Sampajañña**. If you don't do all these 3, then you can **forget about** meditation because **Sati Sampajañña which is the daily mindfulness** is a must. So that throughout the day, you are **mindful** then only you use it **to cultivate** the Noble 8-Fold path, okay?

4.9 Question 9 – Continuation of Question 8

Question 9 by Sister Chwee: So if we do, say we do for one year, let's assume. Theoretically, if we can do for one year, your momentum will be there, and you can just continue to the next 7 years.

Bro. Teoh: I will give you another example to let you understand better. Do you play badminton? If you have **not** trained until you are so skillful, the moment you stop playing, you will lose your strokes, in no time. You will become very clumsy and you have to start your training all over again. But when you had trained until you are **very skillful**, which was what I had develop as a student while at the university, - even until today for 20+ years I have not held the racquet, if you pass (the racquet) to me, my strokes are still with me.

I can still flick, and do all those strokes. Why? Because I had trained until I am already skilful and the strokes are already a part of me.

That's why, not until you have trained, until you have already crossed the stream, meaning you are at least a Sotāpanna already, then you can take your time, understand or not? Otherwise the tortoise will catch up with you. The tortoise, slowly but surely will catch up with you. Because you can only be complacent after you have penetrated at least the 1st stage of sainthood, otherwise you better, strive on with heedfulness! As advised by the Buddha.

I have to clarify this otherwise if they quote you and said **sister Chwee said**, - 'We can do 1 year then we break for half a year; we go for tour then come back and we start again because the momentum is there already, and then we continue our cultivation'. You can find out for yourself whether this is possible or not? Unless your parami from your past is very good, then you don't have to worry. Maybe in the past you have already done it. Then you can afford to go and "lepak" (meaning enjoy your life first) and then suddenly one day you will **become very serious**.

4.10 Question 10 – On Truth

Question 10 by Sister Chwee: You said quite often that Dhamma is everywhere, Truth is everywhere and for those who see, they always see, and why can't you see? Am I right?

Brother Teoh: Wah! Very good and not bad. You must have been listening to those recordings and read my Heart Sutra short notes.

Sister Chwee: I have been reading your stuff. So if you said that, sometimes I think I also always see, but is that false? Is it the mundane mind? Sometimes maybe that is called doubt? Would **you** like to comment on that?

Bro. Teoh: Okay, I can. The 1st comment is very simple. The moment you have doubt, that is **not** the real seeing. If you really see, there will be no doubt. You will know what that thing is because what you are referring to is the **mundane seeing**, which is **knowledge based**. You think you know; you think you understand the words, **“Truth is everywhere, why can’t you see?”** then just now you asked me what reality is? Which means you cannot understand the difference between “reality” and “truth” - the two are the same. That’s why when you asked that way it means you haven’t penetrated, you haven’t had the understanding.

Comment by Sister Chwee: But when I think I got it.

Bro. Teoh : Ah the word is very important, when you said, I **“think”**

Comment by Sister Chwee: Okay, I say I have it. Then people would come around and tell me, no, no you haven’t got it. You got it all wrong and so on and so forth. If you hold on to that sort of view,

there will be people that will say, oh she is so rigid, she doesn't know what she is doing and so on and so forth...

Bro. Teoh : So what are you going to do when you hear that?

Comment by Sister Chwee: Well, when I stick to my view, I will stick to my view. But in a way I'm concerned that I may not be following the right path or according to reality as we know it.

Bro. Teoh: You are also what you are and they are also what they are. It has nothing to do with that, nothing to do with whether you are on the right path or following the reality or not. Because Nature Law, Law of Kamma, governs everything. You are also what you are because of your kamma, the Buddha said. You are born of it, heir to it, conditioned and supported by it and you are what you are because of your kamma. Each and every living being is like that too, so they are just the way they are, do you understand? So it's not a question of what your thought says, your thought can say anything, do you understand?

But ultimately the **one that calls** the **shot** is the **Law of Kamma**. So if you have not done sufficiently then your karmic nature will be weak because you reap what you sow; that's why the focus is on the cultivation. Forget about whether you are enlightened or not yet enlightened. Because the thoughts will keeps on questioning, so you just do! My advice is what? **Don't try to know**, can you all remember? Just do **sincerely** and **diligently** with **faith**. Who is trying

to know? The **thought** is trying to know! The thought is very “k-po” (meaning busy body in Hokkien) asking ‘Am I doing it right? I **think** I am doing right’. This type of thinking is what the mundane mind will always speculate on. Your view can be anything but the law that governs everything is the one that has the final say; which is Nature’s Law of Kamma. That’s why I always said, ‘As long as you are sincere, you have the faith and you persevere, the Dhamma will be there’. The causes and conditions will be fulfilled and you will awaken.

That’s why don’t try to know, just cultivate, silent, and be patient. The one that is not patient will have a lot of negativity. Because your views and opinions can come through the back door and continue **to stir you** and make you **react** and behave that way. It’s just like your question, when **you think** you already can see and then what if (you used the words) somebody come around and tell you, no you didn’t see. Then you get agitated. Then you said I will stick to my view. Then argument may happen. That’s not following Noble 8-Fold Path because there is no understanding and that is not trying to share sincerely. That’s trying to be right, - right according to who, you never check, understand or not? So the reality is “no right no wrong”. People are just the way they are, you are the way you are, she is the way she is or he is the way he is, so the world is the world. Humanity, living things are just the way they are, the world is just the way the world is. Because all of the causes and conditions at this moment are like that, hence it has to be like that, understand or not?

Earlier on the bird chirps because there is condition to chirp very loudly, then the weather wants to rain and it rains because there are conditions for it to rain. But if let us say you don't want the bird to chirp when you are listening to the Dhamma. **Your thought has the right to do that**, but **the bird is the bird**, understand or not? The bird will continue to chirp. So just like your **chattering** mind, when you are **still heedless**, when you **don't have** the **spiritual faculties**, it will continue **to chatter**. It will continue **to comment** and say a lot of **things inside** due to its **heedlessness**. So **outwardly** you may be **quiet or silent** but **inwardly** you are **very noisy**, understand or not?

Whereas the **trained mind** is very different, the **trained mind** that is **aware** is **inwardly** very **quiet**, very **peaceful**. So in order to understand whether you have **really progressed**, and have the **realisation** or not, we have **to inquire** like what we went through just now via questioning: Are the **enlightenment factors** there? Are you **ever mindful throughout the day**? Are you **constantly investigating** the **Dhamma**? Do you have **Saddhā and Vīriya**? Do you have **Pīti and Joy**? Or instead you are **still heedless** and have a lot of **wrong views** and **opinions**? Or everyday you are still **not happy** with what people said, **upset** with this and that. They are so different. So based on all these you can easily check whether you had progress or not.

If there is **Pīti** leading to **Passaddhi**, which is **tranquillity of mind**, **stillness of mind**, the **silent mind**, the **meditative mind** then you know you are on the Path. And this **heedful mind** is **not chattering**

anymore – this you can check with Sister Alicia and Brother Song, because they can also be in that **state of heedfulness** throughout the day. Inside (their mind) like nothing throughout the day, hardly any thought. **Do you think she meditates a lot** following the way most people think? She hardly meditates as far as **formal meditation** is concern. But she is **mindful** and **heedful throughout the day**. You can ask her, she is over there. There she is **smiling** and **laughing**, because **she had straightened her view** through listening to my **dhamma talks** and **sharing** all these while **continuously**. And that was what she did and because of that she can keep on laughing and smiling because nowadays she has **so much joy** and **happiness**. Do you know why? It is because there is Pīti and Sukha in her heart.

That's why when you cultivate, when you are on the right Path, your **views will be straightened** then all these **enlightenment factors** are there. Then she also said to me, nowadays everything she sees is **from the heart** just like the **fish she saw** while at the **Cameron Highland's retreat**. She said, 'Eh **how come** the **awareness** and the **fish moved as one**'. Last time she cannot see like that. Last time the **head or brain keeps on perceiving**; now it is **from the heart**. How come it is like that? Then the fish like can talk to her, why is it like that? That's why the **real cultivation** is **not** what you think. But when you really go into it and you understand what it is, all these can happen. Then it becomes like **so clear to her, so beautiful** with **so much joy**. And because of that nowadays **she can understand** things (especially dhamma) very fast. You can see how she **transforms** and **came out of depression on her own** via

understanding alone. Do you know, she had 15 over years of depression earlier on? But within 3 years of attending my classes she was able to come out from her depression and this is possible because of her dhamma understanding; she was able to **recover completely** from her **medication/drug dependent** depression. Ever since then she is no longer dependent on any type of **anti depression medication.** She doesn't need them anymore. Her depression problem is gone. Now her mind has become **so beautiful**, she **can understand** all these with ease and she has so much joy. Previously when she attends retreat, the next day she already wants to go back. But nowadays she is so different. After the retreat she not only said **she enjoyed it so much** but she **wanted to stay longer** if possible. She even commented – oh so fast 9 days retreat already over. That's why now you can see her joy, her happiness and she is no longer like before. And not only her, there are other kalyanamittas who had similar experiences like her too.

So these are what the real cultivation is all about. If you are really serious **all these are possible.** This is to give you **faith** so that it is not only Bro. Teoh alone can do, and all the rest cannot do. If that is the case then no point, understand or not? But if other kalyanamittas also can do and have similar type of realisation and experiences, then it is a lot more convincing. If that is the case, it means most of you have not got it right as yet; you all are not serious enough as yet. **Those who can make it, they are serious;** they may also have their past cultivation to support them. Many of them are now on the way, and they will move very fast, especially

so since last year and the beginning of this year. After May this year - after I come back from my **tour** of the **Mediterranean holiday** they **will move even faster** because nowadays the **consciousness**, the **energy**, they are **very different**. You can feel them at our **Tuesday class**, **Thursday class** and even at this **Sunday class**. They are **very different nowadays**. Even at **our recent monthly house dāna** cum **gathering of kalyanamittas sessions** the **consciousness** is also very different. Later on when the **kalyanamittas force moves**, I can tell you, the **whole consciousness** is going to be very different again. Because all these kalyanamittas, they have **got their nature**. Even though **not fully** manifested as yet, and **most of them they still don't know**. Later on **when things happen** they will come to know. I can tell you a secret; - **you all are not here by chance**. You all are here because of your **past affinities**, your **past cultivation**. Now Sister Chwee is very excited.

4.11 Question 11 – On kamma and dāna

Question 11 by Sister Chwee: Bro. Teoh, I was reading the WhatsApp, and there was a very good question which Sister Cheng Hoon brought up, regarding kamma and dāna. How can we improve our kamma? Improve our dāna?

Bro. Teoh: Okay maybe we will skip our usual meditation session and continue with our Dhamma Q & A instead.

Comments by Sister Chwee: I think no need to answer the questions already because I had found the answers in the whatapps.

Bro. Teoh: Never mind, since there are conditions, I'll explain a little bit. Sometimes these are the conditions that will arise and it is mainly because not only you all want to know, "up there" also they want to know.

So we will have a discussion on this topic, the **difference** between kamma and dāna. It is very simple. What is kamma? And what is dāna? How are they related? Is there any relationship between the two? These are more important questions. The two words are different, aren't they? But how are they related?

Sister Alicia: I will just try to answer. Can I say, I do dāna **with understanding** so that the kamma will be taken care of? Ah I don't know how to say it appropriately because my English is not so good.

Bro. Teoh: Sādhu! I understand what you mean and it is **a very good answer**. We should all rejoice with Alicia's answer, **Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!**

You see the word can be very simple. Dāna, - oh I am doing dāna, I am offering dāna to the monk. I donate money to charity. Do you know what she said just now? If you do dāna **with understanding**, that makes the **big difference**, understand or not?

One example of doing without understanding is: - you do because other people do. This means, you follow what others do believing that it is a **meritorious action**. Doing such 'merit', your action is out of what? Out of '**greed**' for the merit right? What is merit? It's something wholesome equivalent to a gain, a type of greed, understands or not? Hence it's no more a **pure action**. You may have merits but compared to the one who **does** it with **understanding**, their **respective merits** are **world apart**. So that's why everything you do, you must have this word; **you must do** with '**understanding**'! This is most important, that's why you must do it with **understanding**.

Then what is kamma? Kamma is one of the great spiritual laws that govern all of our lives, including all of other living beings lives and existences. As mentioned clearly by Lord Buddha, there are 5 Daily Contemplations that you must reflect and contemplate on every day. What is the last one? Just now Chwee just said it. Ah yes, "You are born of your kamma, heir to your kamma, conditioned and supported by your kamma, and you are what you are because of your kamma".

Even in our chanting book, you can find it. So if you understand that this Law of Kamma is so powerful and so important, what must you do? You must take care of kamma, isn't it? How do you take care of kamma? You must follow the advice of all Buddhas to:

‘Avoid all evil, do good and purify the mind’ (Dhammapada verse 183).

How do you avoid all evil? Yes, keep your **precepts**. How to keep the precepts? You must **train your mind** to be **ever mindful**. Then how to **cultivate goodness**? Ah yes, do good - means you go and do **dāna** with **understanding**. Don't just go and do base on what people said. I make offering to monks because they are **more virtuous** or **those monks** are **more senior**. It means you have greed to offer to those monks, but if I said, ‘You do **with understanding** what does it means?’ When **there is condition to do** things **conditions will arise** then you will go and do. Then you will come to realise that you are **very blessed** or **lucky**. Somehow the monk will appear and you will do it in front of him. I will give you an example then you will understand.

During the year 1986, when **Master Hsuan Hua** came to Kuala Lumpur; he gave dhamma talk every night at the Buddhist Association along Old Klang Road. I went there with my wife and every night I will do the recording and I will listen attentively to his talk. Do you know what happened? On the third day, we were upstairs because downstairs was full and packed with people. Upstairs has less people because not many know how to go upstairs. But that day upstairs was also full of people. Then do you know what happened? Suddenly the news came out, that one of the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's very close friend or disciple, wanted to see him and he had agreed to meet him. They wanted to avoid

the crowd downstairs, so they came upstairs. They came upstairs to wait for Master Hsuan Hua. I also didn't know about it as I was doing the recording with my wife. Then do you know what happened? All of a sudden, they saw Master Hsuan Hua came out with some of his disciples, and when he was about to move to meet with his this friend, the crowd became like **very excited** and everybody rushed forward and wanted to make offering to him. They wanted to come **in front of him to pay respect** to him. Then do you know what happened? He stopped and said, 'If you all come up some more I would go in'. So everybody tolled the line. Then I told my wife 'Don't do anything' because we also got spare "ang pows" (or red packets) just in case we got the opportunity to offer. I told her, 'We just kneel in front here and don't move'. I kneel here and she kneels over the other side. We just made aspiration, to make the offering. Then Master Hsuan Hua walked up to meet with that person. After he met with that person, he wanted to go back in already. Then a lot of people wanted to make offering to him. Then he said again, don't come forward, if you come, I will go in. Then very strange, he walked towards me for me to pay my respect and make the offering. Then he turned to my wife, she also paid her respect and offered. After that he went in.

You can ask yourself, how did it happen (this way)? Because he **can feel, his 'nature' understands**. If I had the greed, and rushed there excitedly wanting to offer just like the others, then it would have been different and very likely we will not be able to make the offering. But because I have **the faith and understanding and my**

mind was very calm, very clear and I have this **sincere intention to offer**. When I was in the university I did not have the means because I haven't come out to work yet. That's why I told myself, if I see him again, I will do whatever I had missed out when I was a student as I did not have the ability or means then. And the opportunity came, immediately after I made that resolve. One Christian lady in my office came in and gave me some forms. I thought it was for a Christian donation, so I said 'okay I'll donate'. Then when I looked, at the form I was so surprised to see, 'Master Hsuan Hua's visit to Malaysia'. Ah, like that also can, then everything just falls into place. I requested for more forms; I didn't know that he is already here. Then I contacted my wife who told me, one of her lady classmate's Brother, was ordained under Master Hsuan Hua. And she contacted her classmate and was told her brother was part of the delegation that came over to Malaysia. So we contacted him and made offering through him. That was the first time that I donated USD500 as offering and together with some other requisites we just made the offering and gave with **joy and understanding**. That's what you should do, you **make the resolve** and then you do **with understanding**. You **don't have greed** because **there is condition to do**. If there is no condition then never mind. So these are the two different understanding.

The Buddha said without the Dāna parami, you cannot really start your cultivation. That's why to do the meditation, the Buddha said, after Dāna you must have Sīla before you go into Bhāvanā, which is the meditation. So now you understand how the Teaching comes

about. It is from this Law of Kamma that everything comes about. This part is doing good (referring to Dāna), this part is to avoid all evil (referring to Sīla), and this part is purifying your mind (referring to Bhāvanā). That's why the whole Teaching is here, within the advice of the Buddha – Dhammapada verse 183. This Dāna parami of doing good is for you to **invoke the power of merits**, for you to make the **appropriate aspiration** to help you **progress** along the path of Dhamma. Then this Sīla parami is for you to avoid all evil. That's why if you cultivate Dāna, Sīla and Bhāvanā it means you are following the advice of the Buddha, based on the right view with regards to this **Law of Kamma**. That's how the whole Teaching comes about.

That's why **without Right View**, you don't know how to start or move the cultivation. That is also the reason why Noble 8-Fold Path starts with this very important **Right View path factor**. Right views with regards to the law of Kamma, the law of the Mind and the law of Dhamma. And they are all related, understand or not? That's why the whole Dhamma is linked when you understand. That's why I said they (the higher beings) also want to listen (referring to the rejoicing thunders at the background) not only you. Okay can you all follow? Do you all have any more questions?

4.12 Question 12 – Continuation of Question 11

Question 12 by Sister Chwee: Following from that, does that mean we have to do all 3 to get maximum benefits? What if you do 1 and 2, or 2 and 3 or 1 and 3?

Bro. Teoh: You look at Alicia, she is laughing. The very important understanding is not to talk about maximum or minimum benefits because that **mundane mind** always wants to optimise on any opportunity, via thinking this way - to have maximum benefit we must do all 3. If you can do one at a time **with understanding** - the word is **with understanding**, you will **benefit tremendously**. **Understand then only do** or **Do with understanding**. It is the same for Meditation, otherwise you do **without** understanding. When you come to attend the Diamond Sutra class then you can understand. The merit is so different. The Diamond Sutra class, this Tuesday we are going to start. Heard the thunder? Up there rejoicing like anything (referring to the continuous very loud display of thunder at the background)! Any more question?

4.13 Question 13 – On letting go

Question 13 by Sister Cheng Hoon: What I'm going to say is not really related. I remembered you always advice me, '**to let go** (not to attach) via **letting things be**'. Now I had let go so much and put on weight so much, so how?

Bro. Teoh: You see that word “let go”, I have already explained to you all before **‘if you hold you cannot let go’**. But because you have a little bit of understanding, via having straightened your view to a certain extent, you can manage it a bit better, it’s not to say you manage to let go. You are **not so attached** to it anymore and you **do not give it so much meaning as before**. You do understand that, end of the day you will suffer if you **continue to attach and cling, so no point clinging or holding**. But when you say **‘let go’**, it is for people who are **still deluded** because if you are deluded you cannot let go. **Only the deluded one will hold**. You hold because to you it’s important. But the thought said, ‘If I hold I will suffer’, so the thought will come back through the **back door** and said, **‘I must let go’**. How do you let go? You may think when you don’t hold on to it, verbally or physically cum outwardly, it means you had let go. But **inwardly** you are **still unhappy**, understand or not? Inwardly you **haven’t** really let go. That means at the **mind level** you never let go, **only verbally you let go**. Most people are like that, but the moment you already have the understanding and the wisdom, you don’t hate that person anymore. You don’t have anything to do with that person anymore, which means you are not holding onto it, you are not thinking about it. So when you understand you don’t hold. Then why is there a need to let go!

Only deluded people who hold need to let go. And **if you are deluded, you cannot let go**, because at the heart level you never really let go. And this is stated in the Diamond Sutra. You are only outwardly or verbally ‘letting go’ but inwardly attached. What does

this mean? It means **you are lying to yourself**. So when it comes to this thing, her other question is, 'When I let go I become fatter'. What does she means? It means she doesn't understand. You become fatter because you have **less worry** and you **eat a lot more**. You **eat too much**, you don't have the **awareness to be mindful of food**, understand or not? If you are mindful of food, if you are aware, you will understand that **this body only needs** so much. If I over eat I become fat and it will affect my health. If you have that understanding, you will know what to do. Just like the Dhamma, if you understand the Law of Kamma you will know what to do. So be mindful of what you eat. You **won't be fat** if you **don't overeat**. **Relax and be happy** does not mean you don't have to maintain your physical. Your physical you can maintain. That's why I say you can go and do your gardening and many other things that can keep you active and in shape. You can reflect and contemplate on the Dhamma. Once you become **complacent**, then you will go back to **your old way, you think you know** then you **stopped cultivating**.

When you got problem only you start to reflect again, contemplate again and want to come back to attend the class again. Most people are like that, so if you don't have that problem then it's good. This is what human beings are all about. Understand or not? When they got no more problems, the Dhamma is not important. But when they have problem, the Dhamma becomes important again. Then they come to attend the Dhamma class.

If you have this type of mind or tendency, then you tell yourself, your life you have to decide what is it that you want because **you hold the key to your own life's destiny. To be happy or to be miserable is entirely your choice, so decide wisely.** And not only this life, this type of **understanding can liberate your mind and free you life after life.** If you determine to have this understanding, whenever you arise or when you choose to come or have to come, if you **determine, aspire with determination,** then this understanding can come about. And it's very beautiful.

4.14 Question 14 – On conditions behind cultivation

Question 14 by Sister Cheng Hoon: May I say something? I dare not come nowadays is because my husband had blacked out before; I don't want to leave him at home alone. Sunday is usually the best day but nowadays Sunday also bad for me because visitor may just pop in without appointment and that disturb my peace. I wish they will ring up like overseas people to inform that they are coming prior to their coming. With that at least I can tell them 3pm to 6.00pm I am not in.

Bro. Teoh: Yes, to help take care of your husband is **right duty** on your part. So now you will begin to understand the conditions behind cultivation. You want to cultivate but the other half is not keen or ready so you have to have the understanding. That is the reason why you have to decide because you cannot be selfish anymore. Her husband has 6 stents inside his heart's arteries; and

he needs proper care and attention. You must not be selfish as to neglect him. So you have **your duty as a wife**, but you don't have to worry, because Dhamma cultivation **can be done even in the midst of life**.

Moreover almost all the dhamma talks are **recorded**; so you can still listen to them and you can still learn. There is no problem at all. Like today's talk it is recorded and they are all so clear and so beautiful. Try not to have this wrong understanding that because you need to take care of your husband, you cannot attend the class. Whether you can attend the class or not is **not so important**. It's what you do when you are with yourself in daily life. Even when you are taking care of him you can still learn via **heedfulness** in **daily life** a lot of the **relevant essential Dhamma** because **life itself is meditation**.

In the 2nd turning of the 1st Noble Truth it is stated that this **noble truth of Dukkha** is to be **understood**. You can understand it clearly through your husband's situation when you are heedful. And there is a lot of wisdom there. If you don't understand you will attach and cling, and you will be afflicted. But when you understand then there is no more panic, no more agitation or suffering.

Just like what happened to Alicia at our recent retreat in Cameron Highlands. According to her - last time this type of news affected her very badly. She will be very agitated and she will panic. But this time around, not only nothing happened she can still be **so peaceful and so happy**. She just listens attentively with **understanding** and just

does what she needs to do **to resolve** issues **amicably** so that she **can move on**. And the **mind becomes so different**. Wah, so strange, she tells Yoon Chun. How come it is like that? It's so different now because the mind that understands is so different; no longer behaving like before. Previously small, **small things can cause her a lot of fear, worry and anxiety**, can cause her to be **agitated** and **disturbed** and she cannot do anything thing already due to the **bad news** etc.

Dhamma is **everywhere**. If you can have the **mindfulness** and **awareness**, you will **develop the understanding**. You will be able **to contemplate** and **reflect deep** into them to develop the **right understanding to straighten your view**. That's how you can **free** and **liberate** your **mind**. **All these are not difficult**; you only need to be **heedful, mindful** and **aware!** That's why **daily mindfulness in the midst of life is the real meditation**. **Life** itself is the **real Teacher**. You can learn **a lot from life** because I personally **learn** a lot from life.

4.15 Question 15 – Continuation of Question 14

Question 15 by Sister Cheng Hoon: Can I add something?

Bro. Teoh : Yes you can.

Sister Cheng Hoon: I'd like **to thank** Bro. Teoh for what he had taught me thus far. The little bit that I can understand had helped me so much at that time. I remembered when my husband blacked out in the middle of the night, I asked my young neighbour to come over and help me. Initially he thought I myself had problem. I said no, my husband has blacked out. He came over and helped me to carry my husband into the car and I was very calm when I drove him to Hospital Serdang which was miles away at 3.30 am in the morning. And I later rang Bro. Teoh after everything had settled. I was not afraid then, **I just do what I need to do!**

Bro. Teoh: Yes that was a very good example. I remembered what happened on that day. She was alone that night when her husband blacked out. After that she made that phone call, after doing what she needed to do. Later on the good news came after the doctor saved her husband. That was how **she experienced** that **1ST Noble Truth reality** and that was **a very good test for her cultivation**. Under normal circumstances when your own husband **collapsed** like that, you would have **panicked** like anything. Even the ambulance's phone number also you will forget. You may not know how to dial the numbers if you had panicked. But in her that case she was **very calm** and **she did very well**. She just called up her neighbour and asked him to help. And she herself gets her husband into the car and drives him to the hospital where he was attended to by the doctors then he recovered. The doctor put in 6 stents in one operation, - just imagine. I put in only 3 stents and it takes 2 hours,

so 6 stents must have taken 3 or 4 hours. Given her husband's age, of almost 80 it's not easy. After his recovery from that heart attack - now he is still going strong despite his age.

So these are the Dhamma that can help you all. That's why she has a lot of **gratitude**; otherwise it is **not easy to cope** because life is like that. Always remember when certain life-threatening situations have arisen even if you panic also no use, worry also no use. What is important is - here and the now! What can you do? You can **calm yourself down** and **learn to accept** whatever happens because these are Nature Laws; these are the realities of the moment. Happened already what can I do? I will do what I need to do. So I will try to resolve them **amicably**. If I need help then I call for help. If help is coming then I will wait otherwise I will make another call. Then I have to remind myself, I got **2 options**. 1st option is to react to it, panic and worry about it and become **miserable** over it. All these will not help and you cannot do anything tangible. The other option is **to calm myself down, accept the reality of the moment and be at peace with the moment** then **act, - act with wisdom**, i.e. via following **Noble 8-Fold Path**. Call people in your contacts then speak to them with the **appropriate** Right Speech to request them to help. Tell them this is an emergency and hope you can help. If you call any kalyanamitta, chances are they will definitely help you. In fact there are quite a number of them who will help you.

I remembered there was a lady kalyanamitta who stayed alone; in the middle of the night she collapsed in her apartment while making a milo drink. Nobody knew about it but luckily she recovered and regained her consciousness 2 to 3 hours later. The hot milo drink spilled onto her when she lost consciousness. Then around 3am, she woke up and she panicked but luckily she has the Dhamma. She got hold of her hand phone and called one of her dhamma friends and told the dhamma friend to inform me. Then that dhamma friend called me and together we went to her apartment. We then took her to Subang Jaya Medical Centre. The doctor recommended a **brain scan** because the doctor was worried that her brain may have **internal injury**. After the brain scan result is out the doctor confirmed that there was nothing wrong. She **recovered** and was she **very grateful**. Then I told her - **in future** you must have **friends** whom you can contact for help **in case of emergency**. Among them there are quite a number of kalyanamittas who are not married and staying alone as single lady. So I advised them to exchange phone numbers and if they go overseas to inform her other friends and kalyanamittas. If for one day or two you don't see or hear from her, then you must **text her** and **make sure she replies**. If she doesn't reply, you must go and check the house or apartment. Also make sure you give your **house spare key** to your trusted Kalyanamitta otherwise if something like this happen then it can be very traumatic. If you don't pass your house spare key to them then they may have to break your house door, which is not easy. In the condominium, the security will not allow you to do that. These are

the few things that you can come out with so that you all can help each other, to develop better **understanding** and **cooperation**. So that as kalyanamitta you can also have **true** and **sincere relationships** to help each other **in time of need**.

Okay, anymore question? What's the time now? We still have around 25 minutes. Anymore question? Otherwise we can meditate for a while. Do you all want to meditate? Ah better meditate, okay I will set the alarm to ring in 15 minutes. You can start your meditation now.

..... (After 15 minutes of silent meditation session, Brother Teoh rang the bell.)

Okay you can slowly and mindfully come out of the meditation. You have another 10 minutes to go. Is there anybody who wants to report your meditation or ask any related question? Make full use of the condition. Just now the 15 minutes was good. Suddenly the air was **so cooling** and you all **can settle down** into **calmness and stillness** very **easily** because no more **noise** and **thunder** and it was very quiet. Yes Sister Chwee – please pass the microphone to her.

4.16 Question 16 – On five daily contemplations

Question 16 by Sister Chwee: Can we do a little bit of revision on the **5 daily contemplations** please?

Bro. Teoh: Do you have your chanting book? It is on page 16, yes very good. You see, regarding the 5 daily contemplations; the 1st four contemplations are related to the 1st Noble Truth's 8 realities. The last contemplation is related to the Law of Kamma. The first 3 are related to our **physical body**. The Buddha wants you to **reflect and contemplate** every day on the realities of this body. He said we have a physical body and we have to understand that this body is **made of elements only**. There is **no knowing**, so it cannot be you. **It will go the way of nature**. That's why he said you have **to reflect and contemplate** on it until it is **very clear**.

The first contemplation is about: **'This body of ours is of the nature to grow old and decay'**. It means you will have to go through this process of old age and decay. But for kids, you undergo a birth phase, then you have a growth phase, then you mature and reach puberty. After that the growth hormones stop then you plateau off. After that you start to age. So this aging phase will start after the growth hormone is no more. As this body starts to age you will come to realise that the growth hormones also no more. Then like a car - wear and tear will set in and your body will start to give you problems. Just like a car, it needs maintenance because sometimes certain parts may break down due to wear and tear.

So as you grow old, as you age, you will come to **experience those life-related sufferings** like rheumatism, Alzheimer, cancer, stroke, H.I.V. diabetes, hypertension, etc. You will start to experience a lot of these things that you **don't experience** when you are a youth.

You become **more tired, more lethargic**; your **organs and senses** start to fail you. You start to have **more problems** with your body, sickness, disease, fatigue etc. Then your recovery from fatigue and your tiredness become less efficient not like before anymore. Last time, after you exercise, you can recover very fast usually within a day or two but now maybe after 3rd day only you start to feel the pain, then after the 4th day, 5th day and one week later you still haven't fully recovered.

So this reflection is to help you develop the **contemplative wisdom** to go through old age as you **confront** this **reality of getting old**. You will have to understand that, the body is just a body; it will **go the way of nature**. You are not the only one that is subjected to this aging process. **Everybody who lives long enough has to go through it**. If you take care of your body, if you take care of your intake of food, if you exercise regularly then maybe like the car, if you maintain it very well it will **last you longer** and will give you less problem. But if you **abuse** the body, **neglect** the body and **simply overstretch** and **overuse** the body then you can create unnecessary **accelerated wear and tear** through your **heedlessness**. When you subject your body to such **abuse**, then this body will **deteriorate faster** and get into problems more easily. As you go through this, you have two choices, the Buddha said, - 1st choice is to attach to it via delusion and develop the **fear, worry, anxiety** and **sadness, sorrow, lamentation and misery, etc**. The other choice is **to accept the reality of this form** because you're not alone in this. Everybody who lives long enough has to go through old age, sickness and death.

When you can **confront** these realities with the **contemplative wisdom** to accept them for what they are and understand that **they are not you**, then you are **not** deluded by it. You don't have to suffer anymore. Then you can be **at peace** with it. You can endure them just like what the Buddha taught under Sabba Āsava Sutta; certain hindrances when they arise you have to endure them. So the **bodily condition** of old age, sickness and death is something that you need to endure via wisdom.

Then there are certain types of things that you have to reflect **on their proper usage** like the purpose of food, the purpose of clothing, and the 4 requisites that the monk received (food, shelter, medicine and robes). It's for you to sustain your body so that it is healthy enough for you to use it to develop the cultivation. It's not for you **to beautify yourself** or **exercise self indulgence**. You are also not supposed to **please your senses** to **develop craving** out of it, like craving for good food etc. Then don't be deluded by this form, don't go and overdo it. Not to say you cannot beautify it; for certain occasions if you need to dress up you can. But do not attach to it do not develop the **delusion** of - like forever you want the body to stay young, don't get sick and don't die. You want to do a lot of artificial things to it. But this form will go the way of nature. Once it has reached a certain age no matter how much cosmetic or makeup you apply, it can only deceive others externally. But deep beneath the makeup, the reality will still stand out, so why not just be natural. **Learn to live naturally**, learn to have **understanding** that this body goes the way of nature.

So this reflection, contemplation will bring forth the wisdom for you to accept the body more and more as it grows old, get sick and dies (which is the eventual separation of consciousness from the body which you all call death).

You can come to terms with all these realities of life and existence. Every living being has to go through this process; if you cannot understand and you didn't reflect into them then **when you confront** them **without wisdom** and **understanding** you will be afflicted, miserable and suffering will arise. You will have fear, worry and anxiety. You fear that you may die, you fear that the disease may cause you to spend a lot of money then you fear that this disease can make you paralysed or miserable and very sick. So all these if you are not careful you will project your thought, then fear will arise to cause you unnecessary suffering. Fear, worry, anxiety are **negative tendencies/mind states** within the mind. Whenever there is fear there is negative energy field. So **fear** will lead to **immunity failure**. **Worry** is another **stress-related problem**. So **fear, worry and anxiety** can cause **your immune system to go down and make you very weak and miserable**. So when you reflect and contemplate then you can remind yourself; if these **are realities** and **not me**, then **I don't have to worry about life**. I don't have to worry about this body getting old, getting sick and die! **Because it's not me**; it's only elements with no knowing. Then I can just **endure, confront** and develop the **appropriate understanding** so that I don't have to react to what happened and in the process become afflicted.

These first 3 of the 5 daily contemplations is quite easy to develop if you have the basic Dhamma understanding. But the 4th one is more difficult. The Buddha said you have to reflect and develop the **clear understanding** that everything you own (or **you think** you own or possess), including whatever that you had held on to dearly (like your money, your wealth, your possession, your property, your loved ones etc) they don't really belong to you. If via **self-delusion** you deludedly think you **own them** then you will attach and cling on to them then you **will suffer** as per the Buddha's 1st Noble Truth final summary. So you have to reflect onto all these that you think you own; like your loved ones, your possessions, things that you had been holding on to dearly so that you are not deluded by them for they are all impermanent leading to suffering when you grasp and cling on to them. They come and they go, hence the reason why they never belong to you. Because of condition(s) they arise but when condition(s) ceased to be they ceased to be. Then they will either **separate from you** when condition ceased to be. Or when your **breath stops**, this entity (the 5 aggregates of form and mind – 1st aspect as a human being) will also **dissolve** hence it cannot own anything. So **separation is a reality** and **separation can come in many forms**, through accidental death, or through nature's calamities. Separation can also happen when there is relationship failure leading to **divorce** and **relationship breakdown** when there is **misunderstanding between loved ones** etc. Also due to **economic crisis**; you can lose your business, investments and all your wealth. You can also lose everything that you own through nature's calamities like flood, tsunami, building collapse, earthquake, etc. So

when the condition(s) arise just like the recent flood in Kelantan and the east coast and now it is happening to Langkawi – they are all very badly affected. And earlier on, we also had the **Japanese tsunami** and **Asian tsunami**, where the damages, destruction and loss of lives were **rather traumatic** and severe. They are more devastating than just normal earthquakes. So all these are the **realities of life** and **existence** and if you don't reflect on them **prior to confronting** them and you cannot develop the wisdom and right understanding, **to be at peace with them** when it happened, then it will lead to suffering.

When you understand that they are **all conditioned arising, causal phenomena** following **nature's laws** then you will be able **to cope** with them **in real life** when they arise. You will also come to understand that there is **no 'reality' within the phenomena and conditions arising world** for they are all impermanent and if you deludedly attach and cling on to them then **it will lead to suffering**. Then you will know how to confront them, you will know how **to accept them for what they are**. You need to develop the understanding before you confront them and that's the **purpose of all these 5 daily contemplations** and reflections. So this 4th contemplation is for you to understand the reality of life and existence, concerning separation.

Then when you are with people whom you don't like, when you cannot get what you want or when things don't go your way and your expectations in life are not met, suffering can also arise

because the phenomena world is not what you think. They have their universal characteristics. They are impermanent. The moment you hold, cling and grasp and want it your way suffering will arise. And because they are impermanent, it's not a permanent unchanging entity where you can cling, hold and grasp and say, 'This is me, this is I, and therefore all these can be mine!' That's the wisdom you must develop. That's why you **must meditate**; you must develop this understanding so that you can liberate your mind and be free.

Then the last contemplation which I had already explained is concerning the right view with regards to the Law of Kamma. This is most powerful spiritual law that governs all of life and existence. And all living beings are subject to this law. That's why the Buddha wants you to understand that there is such a law as the Law of Kamma that explains clearly to you that all beings (not only human beings); all living beings: 'They are born of their kamma, heir to their kamma, conditioned and supported by their kamma, and they are what they are because of their kamma'. After you contemplation and reflection on it you will come to understand the **importance of kamma**. After understanding this and if you still don't have the **urgency to train your mind** to be **heedful to take care of kamma** and follow the advice of the Buddha via Dhp. verse 183 – just like what we had gone through, then that it is your choice. Nobody can help you. And you better don't complain when suffering arises. But if you see the urgency through this reflection and contemplation, then you better **strive on with heedfulness** to follow the advice of

the Buddha. That's why you better cultivate **Dāna, Sīla and Bhāvanā**. So this is what the 5 daily contemplations cultivation is all about.

Then you can go deeper into it via the **3 turnings of the 4 Noble Truths** cultivation. You can reflect as follows: why did the Buddha say this? How can I understand this? Then you can slowly go in; covering all the 4 Noble Truths and their **respective 3 turnings** to develop deeper understanding.

Oh so fast 15 minutes past 6pm already, so I had exceeded the time to stop. So we have to stop. Okay we will do the sharing of merits, transfer of merits then after that you can make your aspiration.

5 Closing Pūja

Closing Pūja chanting: - covering the sharing of merits, transference of merits, invoking the blessing for our nation and making of aspiration etc.

The class ends with reverential salutation via **mindful respect** to Lord Buddha, Guan Yin Bodhisattva and all the Worthy Ones.