

75th Lesson of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra (With Essential Summary on Cultivation)



(Based on a **direct transcript** from the **recording** of the
75th Lesson of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra class
[dated 27th May 2018])

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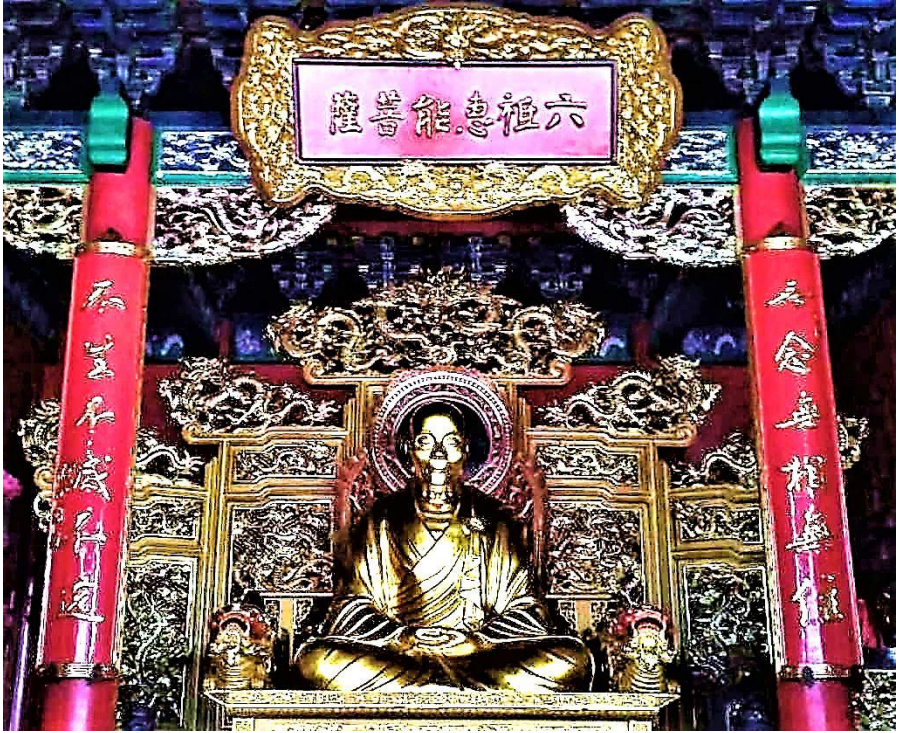
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Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng Bodhisattva

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(Biodata of Bro. Teoh Kian Koon)

Bro. Teoh graduated from the University of Malaya in Civil Engineering in 1979. He has been a ***spiritual practitioner cum Meditator*** since 1971. Since his retirement in 2001 from his **Engineering career**, he has been **sharing** his **understanding** and **experiences** with those who are **keen in their search** for **true happiness, peace** and **liberation** from **birth and death** and **all mental suffering so that they can be a blessing** to all of **humanity via becoming** a **more virtuous, nobler** and **wiser human being**. He gives **dharma talks** and holds **meditation classes & retreats** and weekly **Dharma classes** at various **meditation centres, Buddhist societies** and places that invite him.

For **more details** of **Bro. Teoh's dharma activities** and his **Kalyāṇamittaship grouping** please login to his recently launched **dharma website** at: <http://broteoh.com>

1. Preface

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

As these notes were mostly **compiled** based on a **direct transcript** from the recording of the 75th **lesson** of the **Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra** class (dated 27.5.2018); 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 accordingly **adjust** themselves 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 (audio file)** you can log on to our <http://broteoh.com> **website** under **Repository** of *Dharma material* OR **Google** '*Bro. Teoh's Kalyāṇamittas – A Repository of Dharma Material*' to view them or **alternatively to download** from the below MP3 audio link:

<http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/75-6th-Patriarch-27-May-2018.mp3>

2. Acknowledgement

It is the donors' **sincere intention** that these *dharma transcript notes* be **given free** to 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 **Dharma friends** or **Kalyānamittas** who have **donated** and **helped out** in the **transcription, typing, typesetting, formatting, proof reading, etc.** to make this **free distribution** of **dharma dāna** possible.

Special thanks should be accorded to **Sister Padmasuri and Sister Alicia** who have taken the **initiative** to develop the **draft transcript** for my **subsequent editing** thereby enabling this **dharma transcript book** to be printed.

By the **power of all these 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 dharma friends who have **donated or helped out** in one way or another to realize their **good and noble wishes/aspirations** soonest possible.

With Metta always,
Brother Teoh Kian Koon
(Dated: 30th June 2018)

3. 75th Lesson of the 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra dated 27th May 2018

3.1. Pūjā

The **usual pre-pūjā** chanting of the **Mahayana tradition's** salutation followed by the **Theravada tradition's** salutation, the taking of the *3 refuges* and the *renewal of the 5 precepts* was done (for details please do listen to the recording or refer to our lesson 2 or 3's transcript books).

3.2. Dharma and Sutra Sharing By Bro. Teoh

Ok, you all can be seated. Then maintain some form of attention. We will now commence the Six Patriarch Sutra. Today's lesson is lesson 75. Very good, we should be ending soon. We were at page 382 the final chapter. Ok, the sutra said external insentient things have 5 pairs of opposite. (Someone gently reminded Brother Teoh to recite the verse for opening a sutra). Oh yes, thank you Eng Bee. We should turn to page 1 to recite the opening verse.

Ok, thank you.

Verse for Opening a Sutra

***The unsurpassed, profound, and wonderful Dharma,
Is difficult to encounter in hundreds of millions of eons,
I now see and hear it, receive and uphold it,
And I vow to fathom the Tathāgata's true meaning.***

3.2.1. Chapter X: Final Instructions – Opposites and Duality

Please turn to page 382, the sutra part.

Sutra:

‘External insentient things have five pairs of opposites: heaven and earth, sun and moon, light and darkness, yin and yang, and water and fire.’

This is typical mandarin culture. They always talk about Tian (天) and Di (地) - Heaven and Earth. Heaven is what they call as Tian (天), that is why the **heavenly realm** is called ‘tian fa jie’ (天 法界). Then we have the **earthly realm** like earth bound devas within our planet. So they call it heaven and earth. And they also treat the sun and the moon as a pair and, in the same manner, light and darkness, ying and yang and water and fire. So these are the **five pairs of opposite**.

‘In speaking of the marks of Dharmas one should delineate twelve opposites: Speech and dharma, existence and non-existence, form and formlessness, the marked and the unmarked, the presence of outflows and the lack of outflows, form and emptiness, motion and stillness, clarity and turbidity, the common and the holy, membership in the Saṅgha and membership in the laity, old age and youth, largeness and smallness.’

So this is the way they actually categorize the marks of dharmas.

'From the self-nature nineteen pairs of opposites arise: length and shortness, deviance and orthodoxy, foolishness and wisdom, stupidity and intelligence, confusion and concentration, kindness and cruelty, morality and immorality, straightness and crookedness, reality and unreality, danger and safety, affliction and Bodhi, permanence and impermanence, compassion and harm, joy and anger, generosity and stinginess, advance and retreat, production and extinction, the Dharma-body and the Form-body, the Transformation-body and the Reward-body.'

*The master said, "If you can understand and use these thirty-six pairs of opposites you can connect yourself with the dharmas of all the Sutra and avoid extremes, whether coming or going. When you act from your self-nature in speaking with others, you are separate from external marks while in the midst of them and separate from inward emptiness while in the midst of emptiness. If you are **attached** to marks, you **will add** to your **wrong** views and if you **grasp at emptiness**, you **will increase** your **ignorance**".*

So this is the sutra part, the classification held by them. Now we can go on to the commentary by Master Hsuan Hua.

Commentary:

"Opposite" means mutually dependent and mutually opposed. Nineteen opposites arise as a function of the true-suchness self-nature. For example, if there was no long,

there would be no short. Long is the opposite of short and short is the opposite of long. Long and short are relative terms and between them is the Middle Way.

*Kindness bestows happiness and is the opposite of cruelty. Morality and immorality are opposites. **Morality is the practice of all good actions and the absence of all evil. Compassion pulls living being out of suffering and is the opposite of harmfulness. Generosity means giving; if you can give, you are not stingy. The dharma-body pervades all places and is the opposite of the form-body.***

So this is just a short summary by Hsuan Hua. The actual sutra is much more detailed. But as far as the dharma is concerned, this is just an expression based on the mandarin language and the Chinese culture at that time. These are the expressions that are commonly used - like the commentary says “...*from the **self-nature**, you can come out with **19 pairs of opposites**”.* But as we all know, these are **dualities. Duality is limitless.** It is not limited to 19 pairs of opposites or any number of pairs. Like the first five pairs of opposites for external insentient things, they always talked about the first opposite of Tian Di. (天地). Even in the game of Pai Kao (排九), they also have ‘Tian Di’ (天地) pair of cards which are the two ‘biggest’ cards. Then, I don’t know if there is this mandarin word, ‘Koon’ (坤), [pause...response from floor... yes], this 坤 is my last name. So they said Heaven, Heaven is ‘Tian’ [written on the whiteboard as 天], is this correct? [Response from floor...‘yes’]. Then ‘Di’, [Bro. Teoh wrote ‘Di’ (地) on the whiteboard], is this correct? They said this ‘word’, (pointing to ‘坤’ on the white board), is

the 'highest' on earth. You can go and check it up – it seems this one came from the 'I Ching' and the 'Tong Shu' (通書). So on earth, this one is the highest. I think somebody read it to me and I asked him what the word is and he said this is 'koon'. Then I said my last name is also "koon". Like you all said, 'qián kūn' - What is the meaning of 'qián kūn'? (乾坤). They always use these two words 乾 坤 (qián kūn) meaning Heaven and earth, Yin and Yang and the Universe. As far as I know, this word 'kun' is the highest on earth. It means on earth, he is the 'One'. So this is Tian Di (天地). That is why since young, when I heard these words; it is like my *nature understands these two words very deeply*. There is heaven and there is earth. And of course the Sun and the Moon, light and darkness, Ying and Yang. Ying and Yang is from the 'Dao' (道) teaching. Do you know 'Dao' - the teaching of 'Lao Zhi' (老子)? Ying and Yang is infinite in numbers - not limited by any numbers. So, what I want you to understand is, just what the Fifth Patriarch told Hui Neng: all Dharmas arise from the *self-nature*. So it is not limited to just nineteen pairs. Hsuan Hua didn't explain all these. He just summarized it. So what you need to understand, as far as my nature is concerned, you don't have to worry so much about the description of the opposites. You only need to understand 'duality'.

This English word 'duality' is very good. Is there an equivalent Mandarin word? They normally use these words, 'Fen bie xin' (分別心) meaning the mind that discriminates. But duality is a better good word. Yes, the more accurate equivalent words for duality is 'xiang dui fa' (相對法). So, if you can remember this dharma it is enough. 'Duality' is a very important concept in Buddhism, because according to Master Hui Neng the *self-*

nature is: 'originally empty (there was nothing)', or 'ben lai wu yi wu' (本來無一物) - just as per his poem. That self-nature is 'ben lai wu yi wu' (本來無一物), or originally there is nothing, because this is the Oneness nature, the source of all things. From here everything arises. "How amazing", Hui Neng said, "all dharmas arise from this self-nature". And this self-nature, originally there was nothing. Shen Xiu didn't understand this part. Shen Xiu was trapped in the mind, the mundane mind. He thought that was the **true mind**. *That is not the true mind that is the condition arising mind - mundane or thinking mind*. So, that is the reason why Hui Neng said, 'Ben Lai Wu Yi Wu, He Chu Re Chen Ai' (本來無一物, 何處惹塵埃). I.e. originally there was nothing, where can the dust alight? So these dusts come from duality, the concept of duality. But because Shen Xiu didn't understand the concept of duality, to him there is only wholesome and unwholesome dharma or pure and impure states of mind. So, to him dust is like impure or defilement. When you create this duality of 'dust' and 'non-dust', then you have 'problem' already. Once impure arises, the opposite will also arise, do you understand? If it is not pure, then its opposite which is impure will arise. So, what happens is when Shen Xiu created this, he was trapped in his own creation? That was how Hui Neng countered it by saying, "Originally there is nothing, where can the dust alight". If you don't create duality, there is no such thing as pure and impure - there is no such thing as dust and non-dust, so why do you create it? And after you have created it, you try to meditate via using the mundane mind to do away with it (the 'dust') and that is the reason why Shen Xiu said, 'polish until it shines, so that no dust can alight'. Can you do that? You can't isn't it? The moment you create this, the opposite will immediately

manifest. Then you try to attach to the pure, to the perfect, to the wholesome. Then you try to reject whatever that is the opposite ('impure', defilement, unwholesome, etc.) - so what are you doing? You are fighting your own creations, do you understand? And cultivation is not done this way. If you cultivate this way you will not awaken because this is the **mundane mind**. The *mundane mind creates* and then it **tries to cease its own creations**. How can you cease your own creations? *To do that the thought must die*, do you understand? And **the thought refuses to die because it is egoic**. So the thought that you use refuses to die. That is why when Hui Neng realized this; he **could counter** Shen Xiu's Poem. The Fifth Patriarch also knew. That's the reason why He told Shen Xiu: 'you had reached the gate of enlightenment, but you didn't know how to go in', which means he has developed just the **normal cultivation** of the **sainthood way**. He doesn't know that he has to cease all these. He *hasn't realized that self-nature* which *will arise naturally once the mundane mind ceases*, because *it is the unborn, always there*. The moment you don't create duality and you cease all these movements, then, *that true mind manifests* - because that true mind or nature is all the time there. So that's how Shen Xiu got caught. He got caught in duality; in not understanding all that. That is why the Fifth Patriarch gave him another chance to come back with another Poem to show that he deserves to receive the insignia **alms bowl** and the **robe** from the fifth Patriarch. But Shen Xiu at that time was **much tensed** and he *couldn't come out with any poem*. Because of that, the condition was such that **Hui Neng would be the one who will inherit the Patriarch ship**. Because from the Poem, the Fifth Patriarch knew, he already had the conditions to receive this Patriarch ship. But he

just wanted to give Shen Xiu a chance (that was *before Hui Neng wrote the counter poem in reply*).

For the next one or two days, Shen Xiu couldn't come out with any poem. When Hui Neng came to know about the Poem several days later, he came out and asked somebody to write his Poem for him. The Fifth Patriarch immediately knew the implications and that was why he immediately rubs off the poem and said, "*Never mind, this one also hasn't really seen the true nature*". Then after that he walked to the kitchen area where Hui Neng was pounding the rice. Then he saw Hui Neng with the pedestal. He was small in size and lacked the weight, so he put on a pedestal rock and tied it to his waist and used it to help in the pounding. The Fifth Patriarch knew Hui Neng was gifted and he had his past cultivation since he could understand all these. That was why he knocked on the pestle he was pounding the rice three times. Before he did that, he actually had a short conversation with Hui Neng. He said "Isn't it madness to sacrifice your life all the way to come just to seek Dharma?" Then Hui Neng replied, "I seek nothing less than Samasam Buddhahood". Then the Fifth Patriarch said, "Is the pounded padi ready?" To this Hui Neng replied, "Ready long ago, waiting to be sieved only". The Fifth Patriarch knew immediately and he gave the sign for Hui Neng to see him that night, on the third watch, (三更). That was how Hui Neng went to see the 5th Patriarch and when he heard the Diamond Sutra, he became thoroughly awakened. He only *lack the understanding of how to use the mundane mind*. Do you know why Hui Neng had this problem? Because he was born *without a mundane mind*. That was the reason why he didn't understand how normal human beings with the deluded mundane mind became entangled. So when he was born

without a mundane mind, he didn't understand all these because his mind, his nature was already like that. So when the Fifth Patriarch expounded to him the Diamond Sutra, and when he reached the part which I have shared with you all before; he said *"This mind which is the mundane mind, the five aggregates of form and mind, is karmically conditioned out for you to use, you have to learn how to use it, and yet **not be deceived** by it"*. The moment he heard that, he came to complete enlightenment. This means he completely understood what these things are. The reason why he was able to understand the first part, which is the **unconditioned** was because his mind was without the mundane mind all these while (since birth). So he already understood the **unconditioned part** and what he lacked was the conditioned world's part regarding the mundane mind. That was the reason why when he came to this part, he **straight away understood** that this mind that came with this physical body of his, - even though it was the **supra mundane mind** (because he was born without the mundane mind), he still need to use it and yet **not deluded by it** because this one is **dependent originating, condition arising, causal phenomenal, not real and impermanent**. That is why it is aniccam. If you attach and cling, it will lead to suffering. And because it is impermanent, it **can never be a permanent unchanging entity** where you can grasp onto, cling onto and hold onto and say this is 'me', this is 'I', and therefore all these are 'mine'. Or this is 'me', this is 'I', all these are 'mine'. So straight away he came to **great awakening**. That is why this part is very important and when Hui Neng came to this understanding, he was **completely transformed**, and **he knew how to use them**. But the Fifth Patriarch knew the **causes and conditions** were such that, he **could not come out straightaway as yet** because that form

and mind of his was *at risk of being destroyed; people will come after him.*

There was this mundane condition because the people at that time ***expected Shen Hsiu to be the only one eligible for the Patriarch ship.*** Do you remember? After the 5th patriarch told them, *“Don’t waste time on tainted merits, strive on to come out with the verse to show me that your cultivation has reached the level of understanding so that I can pass on the Patriarch ship to whoever that can come out with the appropriate verse.”* Then all of them decided, nobody should write the verse ***except Shen Hsiu*** (神秀) the chief disciple of the 5th Patriarch. That was the reason they expected him to be the successor or the receiver of the Patriarch ship.

The 5th Patriarch knew very well the danger Hui Neng was in and that was the reason why he *straight away told Hui Neng to leave immediately.* In the middle of the night he sent him off. The story continued. When they were at the boat and wanted to steer off, the 5th Patriarch said *“I will steer you, so that you can go”.* He said *“No, after you have transmitted the teaching to me, now, it’s my turn to steer you”.* That is why he steered the small boat and he was able to leave the way place immediately. The 5th Patriarch then came back to his monastery. The next morning only things started to happen. I think when they realized that Hui Neng was already not around, and then there were rumours that the Patriarch ship had been transmitted. All these came about because of Hui Neng’s second poem. So because of jealousy, a lot of Shen Hsiu’s followers chased after Hui Neng. They tried to track him down to bring back the insignia of the robe and the alms bowl, so that Shen Hsiu can be **officially proclaimed** to be the 6th

Patriarch. Do you all realize, at that time, they even went against the decision of the 5th Patriarch's by going after Hui Neng. So civilization can be such. The part on Bodhidharma's life in China was also very interesting too. Previously, I sent out a video clip, short version for sharing, do you all remember? It was from a cinema show and it is very interesting. It shows how Bodhidharma transmitted the dharma to China, to the East and how he actually introduced this Mahayana teaching. He said to Hui Ke (慧可), the 2nd Patriarch that this tradition of passing down this robe and alms bowl, shall **continue only until the 6th Patriarch**. After the 6th Patriarch there is **no need** for the **transmission** because by then **this teaching, the Mahayana teaching, would have taken root and flourished**. So that was how all these happened.

In this **Bodhidharma series**, towards the end, it was very interesting. At first the Emperor invited Bodhidharma, and so Bodhidharma came to China. In the early years of China's civilization, they had expected the Dharma Master/ambassador from India, to be very famous, to come with dignitaries and large following. But when they saw Bodhidharma **come alone without any follower, without any grand entourage, the Abbot and all those temple monks that were instructed by the Emperor to receive him, looked down upon him**. They had some misunderstanding but Bodhidharma was not affected.

Then one day they decided to have a 3-day and 3-night session of silent sitting meditation. The Abbot and three of his senior monks went it. Bodhidharma was around so he also went in. They made this ruling. They were supposed to cultivate this silent meditation, so nobody should speak. Whoever spoke

would be **disqualified** and had to get out. So what happened was, they meditated for quite a while until middle of the night. Then there were *very severe wind movements*, howling sounds and rain; suddenly the window started to move. So, as we know Chinese usually have this fear during the night. So, with the wind, howling sound and the window's movements, one of the monks developed fear and spoke "What are those sounds? And oh, the oil lamp's light is gone!" Then the other Monk laughed and said "Ha, you are **not supposed** to talk so you break the rule". The other monk said, 'I am the only one that didn't talk.' Then the Abbot said, "You also break the rule". So everybody broke the rule except Bodhidharma because only Bodhidharma didn't say anything. Then there was this glaze ware where they used to cover the Chinese tea cup; he used the glaze ware cover to make some grinding sound on the table. Then when they heard him doing that, they asked Bodhidharma, "**What are you doing?**" Then, Bodhidharma asked back "**What are you all doing?**" They then answered, "*We were sitting in silent Zen meditation to realise Buddhahood*". He then replied "**I am polishing this glaze ware to make it into a mirror**". They laughed at him via saying, "You must be crazy. This is a glaze ware, how can it become a mirror?" Then Bodhidharma replied, "*If polishing the glaze ware cannot make it into a mirror then **how can sitting in Zen without understanding make you a Buddha?*** What I am trying to do *is to give you an analogy so that you all can understand. If what I am doing with this glaze ware is **impossible to accomplish**, meaning it is **foolish to do**, but I see you all doing **the same foolish thing while sitting in Zen without understanding***".

They cannot understand him. [Brother Teoh said, ‘*you all must listen to this, and you will learn a lot*’]. They then asked Bodhidharma, ‘*how then can we become Buddha?*’ Bodhidharma replied, “*One must start by understanding that the Buddha is the embodiment of his great perfection of wisdom and virtues and not in his postures and movements like how he sits, walks and meditates. The Buddha has no fixed postures and Zen is not just about sitting in silence!* Do you think by sitting this way *without* making any noise, can make you enlightened?” He said, ‘*enlightenment is not about the form dharma, not about sitting, not about not talking and all those gullible so-called Zen practices (form dharma).* Enlightenment is *an understanding, a wisdom to be realised by the wise each for themselves* and that the *self-nature or true nature* is to be *awakened to via the direct seeing with the silent mind.* You all *only know you have to sit in meditation* but you all *don’t understand why you sit and how to meditate?* So *how can you realise the truth and awaken to the way?*’ All the monks were *stunned by his reply.* Do you know what they asked him back? – “What do you mean? Everybody sits. If we don’t sit in Zen then how can we awaken to the way?” Bodhidharma told the monks, “You must *start from basic.*” So *these words are very important* – “Start from basic.” What does it mean?

Do you know what the monks’ responses were? The monks thought it means to start as a Samañera doing all those basic preliminary practices. So they asked Bodhidharma, “What do you mean by ‘starting from basic?’ We are all senior monks. We have already gone through all those preliminary training and practices. That is why finally we only need to sit.” Bodhidharma replied, “you have to start from *basic, meaning*

starts from **mind** or 心为根本 (xin wei ken pen) and you must understand **what this mind is all about** (its **2 aspects**) so that you can understand clearly who you are and what you are? If you **can't even understand** that you have a **self-nature** and **everything** arises from that **self-nature** via **creation** by the **mundane mind** which is **dependent originating** and **condition arising** then you are being **superficial** in your **cultivation** and you are **wasting your time**. Whether wholesome, unwholesome, evil and non-evil, etc. they all arise from here, this is **basic understanding**." This basic understanding of the **self-nature** and the **mundane mind** is also the reason why Sakyamuni Buddha, said "Mind is the fore-runner of all things. Mind is chief, when mind arises everything arises." Hence Good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, etc. – they all arise via the mundane mind's creation. And Bodhidharma said, 'if this basic teaching also you don't understand, then **how can you meditate?** Do you follow? This **basic understanding** teaches you that your **mind creates duality** of good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, etc. and that is why the Buddha said, 'Mind is the forerunner of all things and they all (including the mundane mind) arise from the self-nature. And the **mundane mind** is the **source of good and bad, right and wrong, wholesome and unwholesome, etc.** If this understanding which they call "根本" or **basic understanding** you also **don't have**, then you are being **superficial** in your **cultivation** and you all are **wasting your time**. You can go and sit for umpteen years, yet you can **never awaken**. That's why you have to understand that **you have a nature** which is **independent of thought**. Thought is **dependent originating, condition arising** and from it **everything comes to be**. This is **basic understanding**. That is the reason why Bodhidharma's teaching and Hui Neng's teaching are the same; both take you

directly to the **true mind**. Do you understand? Then, from there you can meditate and everything will become easy.

After that the monks started to respect him. They started to listen to him. Then Bodhidharma started to teach them. Then even the Abbott started to develop the real cultivation and understanding. And towards the end just before Bodhidharma decides to go back to India, he gathered them. I can't remember how many of them, I forgot. Was it 10 or 6? Before Bodhidharma left for India, he called them together and sat down with them. According to that video, if I am not wrong there were 4 or 5 of them. So he asked each and every one of them what have they learned?

*“After my passing away, you all should go each in different direction to teach – you all should know what you are supposed to teach and how to teach. **So I want to hear from each and every one of you what you have learnt from me thus far.**”* So one by one they started to say something. You can go and read the Sutra, or watch the video, it is very interesting. The first monk said something very **simple regarding non-attachment to words and concepts of dharma**. Bodhidharma said **“You only learn superficial Dharma”** which means like the *surface of the skin; very superficial*. Then the next monk said something concerning **contentment borne of the direct seeing or awakening**. To this second monk, Bodhidharma said “you have received the flesh”. The third monk went “deeper”. He talked about *impermanence, everything is unreal, the 4 elements*

including space are unreal and empty and everything is dependent originating and that the entire 6 sense door consciousness are empty and unreal. He talks about the **unreality of form and mind touching on the deeper** and more **profound dharma**. To this, he said “you receive the Bone” or something to that effect. And there is another one. This one talked about **empty nature of all things, everything is impermanent, everything is unreal, and everything is dependent originating; very complete**. He said, “you are not bad”. I don’t know what analogy he used but he said “you received beyond the bone, you received quite a bit”.

The last one he asked was ‘Hui Ke’, the future second Patriarch, whom he passed the insignia robe and the alms bowl to. Before he passed it to him, he asked ‘Hui Ke’, “*What have you learnt?*” Do you know what Hui Ke did? You all don’t know what he did? **He didn’t do anything. He just got up and paid his respect to Bodhidharma**. Then after that everybody looked around in disbelief. It is like He didn’t learn anything. Then Bodhidharma said, “That is it! That is it!”, because the realization that one have learnt and awaken to **cannot be expressed**. Do you understand? Whatever that can be expressed is just Dharma, not that thing. “**Ah, you have received everything (my spiritual understanding)**, I will pass you the robe and the insignia”. That is why don’t be talkative, don’t talk too much. **The one who Know (or understand) does not speak or talk. The one who speak (or talk) does not know.**

Because the best way is just to express your **gratitude** via **paying your respect**, that's it, for **no words** can express it.

The moment he knelt in front of Bodhidharma for 3 days and 3 nights to request the Dharma, Hui Ke (慧可) already had the resolve. Do you all know who this Hui Ke is? Yes, he was the one who chopped off one of his own arms that has karmic problem. But before that, do you know who he was? If I am not wrong, he was the one that was **very violent** and **hot tempered**. Do you remember him? He whacked 2 teeth out of Bodhidharma's mouth. Do you remember? He almost died because the King of Hell (Yama) wanted to see him. He asked "What have I done wrong?" And he was told, "You have done terrible wrong. You whacked that guy". According to King Yama, "There is a fully enlightened being around but you are teaching false Dharma and you are so violent". He said, "Cannot be, tell me who the one is?" They told him, "the one you whacked!" Then he asked for permission, "Give me some time. I will come back to you, because I need to see him first". That's why he chased after Bodhidharma and finally caught up with him. Finally, he managed to become Bodhidharma's disciple and received the 2nd Patriarch ship from him. After that he was given the name Hui Ke meaning able wisdom. So you look at the way the Zen series of stories from Bodhidharma onwards until the 6th Patriarch, all beautifully described in the sutra. When Hui Ke (慧可) received the insignia, the robe and the bowl, Bodhidharma told him that this robe and the bowl shall stop at the 6th Patriarch. Just now I

have related this to all of you already. According to Bodhidharma by then (200 years later) the dharma, the Mahayana teaching would have **flourished** (after the appearance of **the 6th patriarch's teaching**). So there is no need to pass them on; after which all subsequent patriarch ship would not have the robe and the insignia.

We visited most of the **6th Patriarch's way places last year - last year's spiritual trip was most beautiful** and it was like meant to be. We went to his birth place and all the other places he visited. One of which was *where he spent his sixteen years of hiding* among the hunters and all those related stories. When he finally came out, he was able to **have the condition to be recognized**, and was then put *in-charge of that temple*. What was the name of that temple? The Abbott saw him because of the **flag and the wind incident**. Then they invited him to teach. Then from there he was given the *position to actually transmit the true Dharma*. That Monastery was very famous, I forgot its name already, what is the name? Yes! **“Guo En Shi” (國恩寺)**. So that place was beautiful. Do you remember, we went in there and the first hall we visited was Fa Hai (法海) and Shen Hui (神會)'s hall. Shen Hui is the youngest disciple. Fa Hai (法海) is the chief disciple. Then there was a drum, like the Tibetan one, which is very big where we turned it around, but whatever it is, all these were very beautiful and we managed to visit almost all the sacred places and we even manage to meet up **with some very good monks too**. Then one of these monks even took us to the place where

the **relics are**. He helped lead us to chant (like what you all did) 'Rou Fo' (绕佛) - as we mindfully walk round the relics. He took us to do the 'Rou Fo' (绕佛) 3 rounds. The monk was very good. So the conditions were very beautiful, that was why it was like meant to be. *The trip was very wholesome and very beautiful.* So all these are conditions to let you understand; I just want to repeat this part so that you all **may recall** that **beautiful spiritual trip**. Apart from *rejoicing* the *basic understanding for cultivation* must be there too.

He said if **this basic** understanding also you **don't understand**, then **you are wasting your time**. Really, instead of talking about thought-based meditation and all those things because this **self-nature** you have to really understand it. Each and every living being has it. Because all beings are connected to this self-nature. From here everything arises. Then the **basic teaching** is as per Sakyamuni Buddha's proclamation: "*Mind is the forerunner of all things, mind is chief, when mind arises everything arises and all dharmas arise from the self-nature; all dharmas, all dualities and things, including the phenomenal world of consciousness.*" And whatever that arises is **dependent-originating, condition-arising** following **nature's laws within the existential world**. Whereas this **self-nature** is the **unconditioned**, it's the **source**, *it's already there originally because it was never born - whatever that is never born will never get old, sick or die*. So when you understand this then you can start the cultivation. That's why **basic teaching must start with mind** - means you have to understand the

mundane mind and the **true mind**. This mundane mind *needs to be trained*. You need the **spiritual faculties** and the **silent mind to cultivate** because you need to return to realize this self-nature. If you cannot return to this self-nature, you cannot awaken, you cannot understand all these. That is the *reason why mindfulness is very important* and it can enable one to return to the **true mind to realize the self-nature**. When you are mindful, aware, without thought there is **no mundane creation**, no *heedless thinking*, no *saṅkhāra*, and no *thought process*. Then *everything becomes clear*, then the *stillness*, the *silent*, the *tranquillity*, the *clarity* allows you **to see things as they are** and that **nature can awaken to the 3 characteristics of nature**. It is only when **this nature awakens, the wisdom comes about** and this wisdom needs to **be connected** to the form and mind **to liberate it**. The five aggregates of form and mind, before it is enlightened, there is **no wisdom connected** to it as yet. This wisdom is very important and this one can come about only via the **direct seeing**. **Not until this wisdom is connected** to this form and mind, this form and mind *will be deluded*, but the moment **wisdom is connected** then you can say this one is enlightened. But this is not you. So the whole of cultivation is just *to realize the self-nature* or the *true mind* or the *silent mind*. Then from there, the **direct seeing awakens** the form and mind. So this **wisdom can only come about via the direct seeing – meaning seeing things as they are**. So this is the awakening. When the awakening comes about, the wisdom is developed and this wisdom will be connected to the form and mind that realises it. So this one we can say is

enlightened, the 5 aggregates of form and mind with the wisdom connected. ***Without the wisdom connected, this one is deluded.*** This one will become an ordinary Puthujjana. The ***moment it's connected, this one becomes an Ariya.*** So whether it is an Ariya or **not** an Ariya depends on ***whether wisdom is connected or not?*** This one is an Ariya, because it is connected (*pointing to the whiteboard's drawing*). Otherwise this one is just an ordinary being or world ling, puthujjana. But this one is not you because this one is impermanent, karmically conditioned out for you to come to this existential world; that is why you must know how to use it ***as a vehicle and tool*** for you ***to live life.*** This one is ***subject to Karma.*** That's why you must have ***right duty,*** one of the four qualities of ***an enlightened disciples*** of the Buddha, the Ariya Saṅgha. Of ***good conduct,*** of ***upright conduct,*** of ***wise conduct,*** then last one is of ***dutiful conduct,*** because this form and mind is subject to Karma. That is why you have your duty; you cannot simply act, because this form and mind is subject to the nature's law of Karma. When you understand this, you understand the whole of life, the whole of cultivation, so a lot of Buddhists or cultivators, they can't progress ***because they don't understand this aspect of the Buddha dharma.*** So this part about the form and mind and its duality, the meaning is ***very deep,*** which Master Hsuan Hua ***didn't manage*** to ***explain and share.*** So now with this understanding maybe we can move on. Do you have any question regarding this, about the self-nature? Anybody has any question? Is it clear now? Yes! Pass the mic to Sister Adeline.

3.2.2. How to Transcend Duality

Sister Adeline asked: Brother Teoh, how to cultivate to *overcome* or *transcend* duality? - is that the middle way? If we are on the middle way can we overcome this problem of duality?

Brother Teoh: I will explain that, do you have any particular question? Or is that your question? 'Yes! That is my question.' Ok, thank you. You all *should rejoice* with the *rather good question*.

You see the question is "*How can we overcome duality?*" To overcome or transcend it you have to develop the *understanding of duality* (as I have explained before). That is *duality is to be 'understood'* but maybe this time (because of this condition) it can allow you all to have the *clear understanding*. So *this duality pertains to what?* Yes! It pertains to the *mundane mind*, because the mundane mind *creates dualities* via *words, concepts and ideas*, do you understand? The *Mundane mind is part of the conditioned world*. So *this duality will always exist within the conditioned world, the existential world*, can you follow?

Duality pertains to the mundane mind, because duality is the mundane mind's creation and it exist within the conditioned world. This duality will always exist within the conditioned world, the existential world. This is because *to live life*, you must use the *mundane mind* or the *thought*, it must arise. So

this one (duality) *pertains to the conditioned world*, because this duality is created by the *mundane mind*. That is why this one exists and it has **Karmic** implications. So, **only understanding** frees your mind, **not** how to meditate to overcome duality. You **meditate** to **realize** what? Yes! *Wisdom*; the **moment** you have **wisdom**, you have **understanding**, which **liberates** your mind because you are **not deluded anymore**. So, you *don't have to fight* duality, just like the **mental hindrances**. You don't have to be, like every time you see something, you recall base on memory (which is knowledge) – you recall, “Brother Teoh said: ‘no duality’ and then you try to practice the middle way”... *this is not the way*. The **middle way is Noble Eightfold Path** because the Buddha said, ‘he teaches the **middle way**’ and there are two very deep meaning to it. The first one is: *to avoid the two extremes of self-mortification and sensual indulgence*. You already have this understanding of the first meaning because this is very simple. That's why those who go by the **delusion way**, they go and mortify themselves thinking that after they have mortified their body long enough, **all their bad karma will be cleared**. When they have no more bad karma, they *think they will become enlightened*. This is **wrong view**. Enlightenment has **nothing** to do with whether you *have good or bad karma, or whether you have exhausted all your bad karma or not?* Enlightenment is about **awakening**. So, that is the first aspect of the middle way. That's why the Buddha said: “avoid the two extremes” via following the **Noble Eightfold Path**. A deeper meaning of The Middle Way which is not explained in the Sutra

is to **transcend duality**. (This is the second meaning or aspect of The Middle Way). To **transcend duality** - you must have **wisdom**. That is why *I always teach you all the understanding that came from my **nature's realization** so that you don't have to waste time to find out for yourself. I always **tell you all, people are just the way they are, the world is the world, thing is just the way it is.*** The Buddha also said, *'whatever that arise there are causes and conditions behind, and when conditions are like that things will be like that, cannot be otherwise'*. So, whatever happened within the conditioned world, **you have to accept first, acceptance means no more duality** (via **reactions of mind**). No more right and wrong, *because he is just the way he is.* He will behave like that because his *conditioning is like that, his views, opinions and everything he holds on to is like that; condition like that, things will be like that.* That is the **wisdom part**. So, to **transcend duality**, you **need enlightenment or wisdom**. What is the Noble Eightfold Path? It's the path that leads to enlightenment leading to the end of all suffering. That's why the **moment you are enlightened**, this *second aspect of The Middle Way you will understand.* The reason why you have to cultivate Noble Eightfold Path is: for you to be **truly enlightened**, you need to have the **embodiment of all the noble qualities of The Noble Eightfold Path**. If you look at The Noble Eightfold Path factors, every one of them **is related** to living life. Can you remember what I had always explained to you all? **Without right view** (which is the *first path factor*), you **cannot understand life**, and you cannot understand *who you are and what you are?* You cannot

understand the **secret of life**: The **five universal orders of nature**. Especially so the **three spiritual universal orders** of *Karma Niyāma, Citta Niyāma and Dharma Niyāma*. All these are part of life.

So when you have the right view, then you can understand life, then you will know how to live life. You will understand what is right and wrong (**still a duality** because this is **still within the existential world**). Do you understand? *With right view, you cultivate right thought, right speech, right action and right livelihood, and these are noble qualities, these are virtues of enlightened beings. You are a noble one, you are noble in all aspects of life: the way you communicate, the way you arise your speeches, your actions, the way you live your life, the way you arise your thoughts, they are all in accordance with the Dharma – wholesome, pure, right, no negativity.* That's why Noble Eightfold Path is **indeed the advice of the Buddha**. The advice of the Buddha is *to avoid all evil first*. How to avoid all evil? This means *clear away all your wrong views. Straighten your views through your meditation, the direct seeing and awakening. Keep on straightening your views* (your wrong view, your rites and rituals, your belief system, your attachments, your craving, your clinging, thinking that this five aggregates of form and mind is real, thinking that everything is permanent and there is no such thing as suffering when you are very rich and wealthy). No, the **truth is the opposite**. When *you have all these views straightened, you will come to realize that this form and mind is not you.* That's **how wisdom comes**

to be, that's how (this **wisdom**) *protects this form and mind from being deluded*. So, that **right view alone** is so powerful, it will **condition right thought**; it will know *it is never worthwhile to break the precepts and violate the law of karma*. That's why you will automatically develop the ability to cultivate the right thought leading to the right speech and right action, and the right way to live your life. Then you will **constantly arise** the **four right efforts** to purify your thought processes, to **abandon** the wrong thought, wrong speech, and wrong action and **to prevent** them from arising (the second right effort). The third right effort is **to cultivate whatever right thought, right speech, right action and right livelihood that are still not in you**. Then the last effort is **to refine upon them and perfect them all**. Then of course you **will be heedful and mindful all the time**. That's why **Sati and Samadhi** are always there. All the Noble Eightfold Path factors are there. **These are all related to life**. That's why the enlightened being must have all these qualities. This is the reason why you have to cultivate Noble Eightfold Path. This is also the reason why I always emphasize to you: **whatever meditation you do in the name of meditation, if it doesn't bring you back to the Noble Eight fold Path cultivation that is not the meditation as taught by the Buddha**. You can claim to be enlightened, having fantastic meditative experience etc.; you can perform psychic, magic; it is **not important** because that is **not** the enlightenment because it is not the **unconditioned**. All these teachings are very important because when you understand, you transcend **duality with wisdom - nothing else**. The Noble Eightfold Path is His first

teaching after His enlightenment when He met the five ascetics; which is the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta – The First sermon proclaimed by the Buddha. The Buddha straight away advice that the **two extremes** of **self-mortification** and **sensual indulgence** are to be **avoided** in his opening statement. This is because he realized how they all went wrong. He himself also went wrong for almost 6 years, he was **mortifying his physical body** and he *attained to all the 8 Jhanas and yet there was no awakening*. That's why he knew and he left his teachers. He also knew when he was in the palace, he was enjoying his life via sensual indulgence which also cannot bring about enlightenment. That's why he decided to eat again; via adopting the **middle way** to avoid these **two extremes** so that he **can has a healthy body** that **can sustain his practice, his cultivation leading to the understanding**. All these **need to be understood**. When he had the understanding, he **meditated according** and when *he silent his mind, he was able to connect back to his true-nature, then he manage to inherit his past perfection (the Sambhogayakaya) from his spiritual nature and that's how it can combined with the Nirmanakaya (his functional bod) to become the Dharmakaya, the Dharma body of the Sammasambuddha that can teach the Dharma*. All these understanding are very important. We **should thank Sister Adeline** for asking such a very good question. *Otherwise, there is no condition to explain all these to you all*. Because this part, just now I only talked about the duality (相对法) part. Duality is very important and **duality is to be understood with wisdom**. Otherwise you cannot break through because this one (duality)

comes from the mundane mind that created them through delusion. The reality is like what the Buddha said, ***Suchness, Tathata and nanadassana or direct knowledge and vision of the reality via seeing things as they are. No more duality because that is the truth.*** That is the reality. That is suchness, the “Is”ness of things. That’s why *nanadassana* means the *direct knowledge and vision of the reality*. That’s why you need to have the ***direct seeing to see things as they are. Not according*** to your *views, opinions, conditioning, belief system, etc. because these are all from memory. Memory is knowledge of the past.* But when you see with the ***direct seeing*** (with *non-perception*), ***without the mundane mind***, all these don’t exist. Can you remember? When you see the image, and the art work via the direct seeing it is just the ***pure perception***, like how the baby see, without the memory coming in. Do you understand? Just that thing, as it is, the ***seeing consciousness***. That’s why the Buddha said, *‘in the seeing there is only the seeing consciousness’* and *there is no one to see, there is nothing to label*, because it is ***before the knowing, before the perception, before the words, before the concept, - that is the direct seeing.*** Now can you understand? ***This is what you need, nothing else.*** And this is the secret for understanding the Buddha Dharma. All these years I have been trying to share only this, nothing else. Everywhere I teach I have been repeating this understanding. ***But today’s is very good*** because ***there are conditions*** for this ***overall teaching*** to come about. Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

3.2.3. The Four Noble Truths, - Mundane and Supra mundane Cultivation

Sister Eng Bee: Can I ask one more question? The Noble Eightfold is the middle way and yet it is still has duality: right view - wrong view, right thought – wrong thought, right speech – wrong speech etc. To transcend duality, I remember on last **Tuesday class** Bro Teoh said this Noble Eightfold Path is the ***mundane cultivation leading to supra-mundane***. I would like to ask Brother Teoh, how to transcend these pairs of duality contained within the Noble 8-Fold Path?

Bro Teoh: This is a very good question. Sādhu! Looks like it is meant to be. Today’s conditions and sharing will ***complete everything*** that ***you need to know regarding the cultivation***. Do you remember in one of the short notes, I think it is in the **Tuesday class**, I said 1st Noble Truth and the Second Noble Truth, they are ***mundane*** Noble Truths. When the Buddha ***expounded the essence of his teachings***, which is The ***Four Noble Truths***, I already said, (since the year 1971 when I read about it), ‘I already knew nobody can proclaimed that unless he is the SammaSambuddha.’ Even my nature at that time said, ‘if I were to have this type of enlightenment, this type of wisdom and realisation, I ***also cannot summarize all these teachings*** into ***just the Four Noble Truths***’ in such a simple way. These ***noble truths are so complete*** that it *can explain to us all of life, the complete mundane and supra-mundane aspects of life, that’s why I use the words – the secret of life.*

So which part is mundane? Which part is supra-mundane? The first noble truth talks about the noble truth of dukkha, the noble truth that explains to you the **realities of life and existence**. He said suffering is everywhere **if you don't have the wisdom** and the understanding of his teaching. This is a noble truth that can explain to us the **prevalence of suffering in this existential world of ours**. There are eight conditions or realities in life and existence that will lead to suffering when you confront them without understanding. That is the first noble truth and the Buddha never said 'life is suffering'. In the second noble truth he said whatever that happened, whatever that conditioned suffering, there are causes behind and that cause is basically **craving** borne of **self-delusion**. Because of **self-delusion**, you **think you exist**, and because of that **you attach, you cling, you grasp and hold**. So these first two noble truths are mundane in nature pertaining to the **conditioned world**. In the **third noble truth**, the Buddha said, '**suffering need not be**, Nibbāna which is the cessation of form and mind leading to the enlightenment can be realized in the here and now before you die', this is the **supra-mundane part**. This is the enlightened state; when you awaken, when you have realized Nibbāna, this form and mind, can be said to be enlightened, but this one is not you. Do you understand? So, that's why **after enlightenment, the form and mind is still there but connected with the wisdom** and this one **can get to live the third phase of Dhamma (Paṭivedha)**. You can realize the state of enlightenment and live the life of an enlightened being; which means you reap the fruits of your hard work. This

phase is the **most beautiful**. You get to live life to the fullest; you get to *experience the wonders and beauty of life*. That's why true emptiness is wonderful existence. You get to experience all of the pristine, beauties and wonders of life and you get to live the life of an enlightened being. This is so beautiful. This is what that thing is. So, the third noble truth is about this possibility of enlightenment, the **supra-mundane**. You have this **supra-mundane understanding** which is the **wisdom**.

When your **mundane mind collapses**, you become **a great being, a Bodhisattva to cultivate the perfection which will allow you to experience the supra-mundane mind**. That mind is no more mundane, that mind is the *supra-mundane mind* because your *mundane mind* has *already collapsed*. Like Hui Neng he was born **without** that mundane mind. The great being when they reached that level of enlightenment, the **mundane mind will collapse**. Then you get to live the life of an enlightened being, that's why the **third noble truth** is about the **supra-mundane aspect of life**. Then you have the **4th noble truth** which *Sister Eng Bee asked*, the Buddha said, 'if you *cultivate this noble eightfold path, it will lead to the end of all suffering*. But this noble eightfold path **still has its duality** of: right view – wrong view, right thought – wrong thought, right speech – wrong speech etc. so when you cultivate you **must understand that duality is part of the existential world created** by the **mundane mind** then you can transcend duality while *living in the world of duality*. It means with wisdom you

can understand that *if you don't create them in the first place then **there is neither this nor that. Things are just the way they are!*** When you realize the enlightenment, which is Nibbāna, you *can transcend them* because you are *no longer deluded* by them. That's why I said from the *mundane, it will lead you to the supra-mundane*. That is what the four noble truths is all about? So, when you cultivate noble eightfold path, it's mundane. Do you understand? But you need this, because *these are the qualities of an enlightened being* because you are a *noble one and you have to be noble in all aspects of your life*. Do you understand? Without the noble eightfold path cultivation, you are not an Ariya. You *can never become an Ariya, because you don't have these noble qualities* within the conditioned world. You don't have **right view** and this form and mind *doesn't understand*, so it will simply do things. But when you have this *right view cultivated*, - law of Karma (Karma Niyāma), then dependent origination (Citta Niyāma), and then Dharma Niyāma, then this one is no longer deluded. It will know the law of Karma, it will not violate it, it will know what is right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, etc. (which exist within the conditioned world) and it will cultivate all these. Then the *four right efforts* to constantly purify the *thought processes*. You can then clear all the entire unwholesome mind states. That's how you can become a truly enlightened being, an Ariya – a noble being with noble understanding, noble character and personality and noble mind states; which *means you are always mindful, ever mindful, and heedful and in the state of Samadhi*. That's how

from the mundane cultivation it can lead to the supra-mundane which is the awakening, the enlightenment. The moment you awaken you will know that this **duality is the mundane aspect of life**. So you **won't get yourself entangled anymore**. That's why at that time - “看山又是山”. No more argument.

First person said “看山就是山” - ya, you will agree. The second person said “看山不是山” because of his direct seeing, - you will also agree and said, ‘ya, 看山不是山’. But the third level or phase of seeing which is **suchness seeing** is where a lot of cultivators cannot integrate back or get it. That is going back to life. That's why finally “看山又是山”. That's why Hui Neng said how amazing it is that all Dharmas arise from the self-nature, and the self-nature is already complete by itself. No need anything else. All teaching come from those understanding. So, now are you clear? Ok Sādhu! X 3.

This mundane cultivation of noble eightfold path will lead to the enlightenment. That's why from the mundane, it leads to the supra-mundane realisation. If you can recall all my teachings, and you go *back and reflect and contemplate, then you will understand my final summary today. They are all connected. They are all linked.*

Since the year 2004 until now, all the teachings are the same; there is no difference, except people cannot understand. Because they use to tell me, “Bro Teoh, now you share

differently” but I told them to go back and listen to all the old recordings, and they realised everything is still the same. It was because at that time they cannot understand. It was already shared but at that time they all cannot understand. Now towards the tail end, especially so after you all have gone through the ***Diamond Sutra*** and the ***Heart Sutra sharing*** you *can understand better* and the ***Heart Sutra is very important*** because all the ***basic teachings before the Bodhisattva way*** are all there. After that, the ***blue book, cultivating the Bodhisattva way*** will ***complement it***. That’s why after this, I think we will go through the blue book, because that day Miss Lee suggested it, which is very good - ***Cultivating the Bodhisattva Way***. After that maybe the Dhammapada verses which is also very useful. I have to bring most of you all back to the ***basic Buddhist teaching***, because a lot of you all are not from ***Theravada tradition***. Like the Tuesday class, we now share ‘*The Life of the Buddha and His Teaching*’. We have to go through that otherwise a lot of you may not know how those teaching and things come about. There are a lot of teachings in the Dhammapada sayings. I only taught you all the basic, the handful of leaves that are needed for cultivation. Recently because of the election, I have added in two more verses, ***Dhammapada verses 119 and 120***. There are a lot of the Dhammapada sayings that are very important and very, very beautiful. So this Sunday class completes the whole understanding, and I think because of conditions, that’s why the ***questions are all very direct and very relevant***. We should thank Sister Adeline and Sister Eng Bee. (Sādhu! X3). Okay,

very good, anymore question? Four more minutes, and you can have your meditation. We shall stop here. We will go through the commentary during the next Sunday class.

3.3. Meditation and Meditation Reporting

We will switch off the lights and you can have your half an hour of silent meditation. (30 minutes of formal silent meditation)

Okay, for those who still want to meditate, you may continue. For those who have enough slowly, mindfully come out of the meditation. Then we will have ***our meditation reporting*** followed by whatever **Q & A**. You just put up your hand; we will pass you the microphone. Anybody wish to report meditation or ask whatever question related to the Dharma or meditation? Anybody?

3.3.1. Daily Mindfulness and Understanding Cultivation

Sister Lee: Brother Teoh always says ‘Meditation only begins when you are able to have the ***silent mind***, which means you begin with the silent mind’. Am I getting it right?

Bro Teoh: So is that your question?

Sister Lee: My question is - the ***self-nature*** and the ***true mind*** are already in pure seeing, right? So, if it is already in pure seeing, then when we meditate, do we still need to meditate from the silent mind, when the mind is already very quiet?

Bro Teoh: So, what is your actual question?

Miss Lee: My question is ... when the mind is already very quiet and silent, do we still stay with the silent mind? Or we just let anything arise from it and just be aware of it?

Brother Teoh: Okay, I will answer you. I think I know why you ask those questions, because you **haven't really understood**. That's why you *still keep on trying to understand using your knowledge*. You see, your first question is, 'is it true that unless you meditate until you **can realize** your **silent mind**, the *real meditation hasn't started?*' This is what I have been telling you all these while; not until your **daily mindfulness is very stable**, you **can't have** the **silent mind**, do you understand? So, you have to develop the **training** of the *mind* to have *this ability* to be **mindful first**. Then **stabilize it until** it is **ever mindful**. This is what I have been sharing all these while with you all. First, is to inquire, 'are your **spiritual faculties** (especially *sati*) developed?' If it is **still not developed**, you will be **heedless**. You will think a lot because of the mental hindrances. So, you *have to cultivate* the **spiritual faculties**. If you haven't worked on that and still want to meditate then you *have to use the mind sweeping method combine with Metta*, to stabilize the mind so that the heedless thinking is **temporarily at bay**. You just feel and relax, feel and relax.... to **de-condition** the **heedless thinking**, so that it doesn't think anymore. Then it will be calm. Then when it is calm, you can use either **Anapanasati** or **whatever skilful means** like *methods and techniques or objects of meditation*

*that you are familiar with to anchor the mind to stabilize the sati. Just do that. Do you understand? Do until your mind becomes **very quiet**, until your breathing also becomes **very quiet** like there is **no more** breathing, until the **subtle breathing** also stop, and then **the mind is just aware** (without any thought). This is the **tranquil mind** which is **silent** and **still**. Have you done that? If you have not done that, it means you have **not trained this mind**. If in the formal meditation also you **can't get it right**, then how can you get that **state of silence** (silent mind) **to do the daily mindfulness**, in the midst of life? Do you understand? That's why your question will keep on arising as long as you have not done that. Because you **try to pre-empt** the thing and you try to use your **dharma knowledge** to understand and believe you are doing it right. I have told you, it is **not about right and wrong**. **Meditation** has to be **done with understanding** and understanding means - it is not about whether I am doing it right or wrong. *It's more of whether I understand what meditation is or not?* When I understand what meditation is, I just do what I have to do. If I **need to train the mind, I train**. If I need to work on the spiritual faculties, I will work on them. *If I need to stabilize the sati, I will stabilize it.* That's why the **bowing** comes in, **chanting continuously** comes in. If you only do it in the retreat or in whatever “**禅七**” (7 days Zen retreat) or even for 1 month, it is **not going to help you much**, because **after that you have to come out of it, then you go back to square one, and become heedless again**. So, what I have been sharing with you all is **train your mind, develop the spiritual faculties until it is very***

*stable, until in the midst of formal meditation you are already ever mindful and aware, the silent mind is already there. The **mind is already in sati**. Then **bring it out into the daily life**, via having **a good and comprehensive daily religious routine**, so that throughout the day, you can stabilize your daily mindfulness to develop the heedfulness cum meditation. Not until you are able to have that **stability** of “*ever mindful state while in the midst of life*”, the real meditation hasn’t really started.*

All those retreat experiences done by those who don’t have the right understanding are **mostly conditioned states meditative experiences** borne of **thought based meditation**, because they are *trying to meditate with concepts and ideas created by the thoughts*. They are trying to do all those things in the name of meditation **without proper understanding**. And they **don’t understand** that *all these doing are by the thought*. So, **who is meditating? The thought is meditating**. Why can’t you just relax, silent and stabilize your spiritual faculties, stabilize your sati or silent mind and don’t try to know anything. **Just do. Do until the stability of mindfulness** arises or comes about then the **form and mind will know** what that **sati is**. Do until when you bow, your body and mind move as one. When you walk, act, speak and moves your body and mind is always as one. You have to do until that **sati really stabilizes**.

Then coming to your **second question**: your question comes from the **thought**. **Why must you stay with anything?** When

you **use words** to describe, you *must not be entangled and confused by the words*. When they tell you, stay with the knower, like some Thai tradition, many of them never inquire - who is the knower? **There is no one to know**, do you understand? The moment you know, you **are not in sati already** because **you have started to perceive**. So this is the wrong word to use. What they mean is stay with the awareness. The awareness is just “aware”, **which means don’t arise the thought**. They use the wrong words in the translation and you all don’t understand, because in the translation it says “stay with the knower”. It is not the knower because the knower already perceived; already know something and that is the thought. So stay with the awareness. The awareness is already there when your mind is **silent**, or **without thought you are already aware**. Why do you **want to try** to be aware? Why do you still *want to stay with anything*? The moment you are **without thought** (after you have trained the mind to be silent), the **awareness** will arise. **Without thought the awareness** is already there, then why do you want to **try to be aware** or **use another thought with a concept to look for that sati or mindfulness**? That *awareness or sati is not the word* for it **cannot be named**. If you have the understanding, when your mind is silent it is already there - for **mindfulness is awareness before the knowing**. But you can’t be silent because you want to know via thought. That’s how your problem comes in. It is **because you are too eager to know**. You are searching it from your thought, from your knowledge. That’s the reason why many of you are trapped, not only you. So, what you need to

understand is **not whether** what I have done is correct or not (right or wrong), that one comes from the thought. It's more about **whether I understand what I am doing or not?** When I understand, I just do. The understanding is more important because when we understand that without the **spiritual faculties**, the **five mental hindrances** will be there then I can silent my mind to check. Then I can see the saṅkhāra movements - the restlessness of mind, the sensual desires and other emotions arising within the daily life. If I realize that the mental hindrances are still active, it means I **have not trained** my spiritual faculties. If my spiritual faculties are there, and the sati is **very stable**, then there is **no thought**. *If that is so then how can the duality arise?* How can sensual desire and ill will arise? Then when I have **Samadhi**, I can *see things as they are at the moment of sense experience*. When I eat something, see, smell, hear and tactilely feel or think of something, **this mind doesn't move anymore** because it is **collected** and **unwavering**. It is just aware. It can be with the moment. So, when you understand, you just train this mind *until it is ever mindful*. That part you have to do. That's why *whatever method or technique* you use like the "rising & falling" or "chanting," - you can chant until **there is no one chanting**, until the **awareness and the vibration become one**. Sometimes the Amitaba chanting can arise in the brain somewhere here, it will arise. (阿弥陀佛, 阿弥陀佛, 阿弥陀佛...), it will arise without you chanting, and the awareness is always with it. That is the **real chanting**. As long as you still need to verbalize you have not reached the stage *where there is no one to chant*. It means the

voice is still there. But initially you need the voice because that is the one that gives you the faith to anchor the mind. Do you understand? So, with the faith and the *vīriya*, you chant, chant, chant and chant until one day you come to realize the chanting is gone, then that chanting appears by itself in the brain or somewhere. Then sometimes, you may go somewhere, the moment the chanting starts, *your awareness is with it already*. Then initially you can follow it via verbalising it from inside, (阿弥陀佛, 阿弥陀佛, 阿弥陀佛....), and you can also use your voice to make it strong if you want. But, if you have the ***stability of mindfulness already***, the voice doesn't come out anymore. It is from inside. It is just the *awareness and the thing as one*. Then later on, *no more chanting from outside also, the inside will chant by itself* because you have developed it. The ***faith*** has manifested. You are connected. Then the ***awareness is always there***. Then in ***whatever condition***, the ***mind is*** in that ***state of Samadhi*** because the ***chanting has developed*** the *spiritual faculties* of ***sati and samadhi***. The ***faith*** is also very important, because *with the faith*, the ***vīriya will arise***, and if every day you do it like a ***religious routine*** ***your sati will also arise***.

For the Mahayana, *almost every day they are chanting, mindful and aware of whatever they do*. That's how they *develop* their *stability of* ***sati and saddha***. So, you have your morning chanting, your evening chanting, sometimes full moon and new moon chanting, and you also have all the various other chanting, like the seven days, the ten days, the nine days and

the thirty days. So, they **continuously develop their spiritual faculties**; just like what you all did during your recent *Quan Yin retreat* in Cameron Highlands. And because of the continuous chanting, that's the reason why some of you like Sister Adeline, her mindfulness just arise because she did it continuously. Do you understand? She **already tried to stabilize her sati before she went for the retreat – while at Rayong Thailand**. She could do it because she was **very determined** and she also has the faith and the *vīriya*. She was ready when she was at the recent retreat. This was the reason *why she benefited so much* while at her this retreat.

She knew the **daily mindfulness** was *very important* and most of the time she and those who have gone through it (like Brother Song), they are **aware** and **mindful throughout the day most of the time**. That's what *cultivation is all about*. As long as you are **not heedful** (ever mindful to cultivate the Noble Eightfold path), you are as if dead, for according to ***dhammapada verse 21, the heedless are as if dead***. That's why you must train your mind until you are **ever mindful most of the time** so that *you are heedful in the midst of life*. Otherwise you are as if dead. The heedless are as if dead.

This training is not difficult when you understand. When you understand, you just do. **Don't try to know, don't worry** about *right or wrong*. *Every time the thought wants to know, you should inquire, am I doing it right? Who is trying to be right?* The **thought** is trying to be right. It is too eager to know. Do

you understand? Then the **ego manifests** without you knowing – via saying, “Hey, I have got it already!” Especially so if I were to tell you: ‘your meditation reporting is good, please continue with your practice.’ Then your thought will tell you, ‘Brother Teoh said I am doing it right’. Then you become *complacent*. *You think you have got it, and then you stop your cultivation.* The **real meditation** is not about doing it right or wrong, it is about **understanding** what you have to do in the name of meditation. If my **spiritual faculties** are **not stable**, then **I have to work on it** especially **mindfulness**. Cultivating saddhā, and Vīriya are relatively easier. *But sati, you must develop it, throughout the day, as per my earlier advice.* A **good daily religious routine** is very important. Before you sleep, meditate. Silent your mind and relax. When you go to sleep, be mindful. Silent and meditate until you sleep. Then the most important is the next morning, the *moment you wake up, be aware of your posture*, then *be mindful of everything you do, then pay respect to Triple Gem, do your meditation again.* If you need to wash up, brush your teeth etc. **do it mindfully**. Then go to your altar, to develop some form of meditation. After that whatever you do, like preparing your breakfast and taking your breakfast, *develop mindfulness*. If you find it difficult you can start with the mindfulness of your **four postures**, then slowly connect them with your *other movements* to **develop the awareness of all the in between movements and activities**. You have to do all these. Before you go out of the house, pay respect to Triple Gem and have faith. Every time you pay respect with your palms, there is **energy that goes to your heart**. Initially your

heart area **has to open up first**, because if your **heart is not sensitive**, I realize that it is **not easy to cultivate** because you **cannot** be mindful from there. When you are **not able to open up your heart area**, you will *not be sensitive to detect energy*. You **cannot even be aware** of your *heart area*, so you **tend to use your brain and your thoughts more**. Reason why you think a lot and **very few people** can develop the **faith until their heart area opens up**. Every time you pay respect with faith, *there is an energy going in without you knowing it if you are not sensitive*. But later on, it will become sensitive, and then you can feel a lot of things there. The awareness from there can actually **speed up the cultivation** because the *true sati starts from there*. Every time you *lapse into heedlessness*, like while doing anapanasati, **you bring it back**, then you *determine to be aware* by coming back to your heart area; from here you aware of outside, everything you do be aware from here. If you train it this way sooner or later, one day you will **come to realize that your mind is now different**, you can *every time from inside develop awareness of outside*. Everything you do, *from inside (the heart area) you aware*. You can see and trace back via recollection of mind. Then, all these daily religious routine, whether you are working or doing your daily chores, you have to **maintain mindfulness**, even **while driving**. So, that part **needs to be stabilized and established**, that's why it is **a full time job**. I used to use these words, but it doesn't mean that you *have to retire from your work*. Full time job here means **to meditate full time you don't have to retire**, *which also means in the midst of your working life you can also*

develop mindfulness; that is what I mean by full time cultivating. Otherwise, like one of the Kalyāṇamitta (about ten years ago), she thought when I said, '**meditation is a full time job**' she approach me and talked to me and said, "Brother Teoh, I **still need money**, so how can I retire?" I said, "Who asked you to retire?" She said "you said it is a full time job". I say full time job **means whether you are working or not working**, you are **full time developing the training of your mind** to be **aware or mindful** and this is what meditation is all about. It **doesn't mean** that you **have to retire from your job**. **No!** *If you need to work, you work. If you have to work, you work. If you can afford not to work, then it's your decision, you can either semi-retire or retire.* But *whatever you do, whether retire, semi-retire or working, you can still cultivate. Cultivation is about developing continuous mindfulness* (awareness), and this is **what the real cultivation is all about**. So, develop this understanding, so that you are clear, then your focus is there. *By doing that you won't get lost again.* Otherwise this question keeps on coming up, *because it is from the thought, the thought wants to know whether I am doing it right or not?* It has nothing to do with right or wrong. It is like if you want to learn something, take for example cooking or whatever, you can read up the theory but as long as you don't try out the actual cooking, it's all theory, - no use. Do you understand? If once a while you cook, then you ask people to try to taste it and you ask, 'does it taste good'. If they say yes! Then you know you have done it already. Then you become *complacent*, and then you write down the formula, through **knowledge** to

remember how you do it. That is **not a skilful cook**; a skilful cook **doesn't need anything**. That manual only serves as a guide and he knows that all those things that are mentioned in the book are **based on assumptions** because *all these are just guidelines*. It is **not rigid** and **ultimate** because everywhere the sources of those ingredients are different. The cucumber, onion, and vegetables you buy, the oil you use, - all these ingredients may come from different places and they are bound to be different, do you understand? And the way you understand the instruction is also very important; that's why everybody will cook it differently, but if you are a **skilful cook**, you don't need to rely on the manual, you smell, you see, then you will know how to start the cooking already. You will know how to buy the ingredients, and try it out. Then after a while, they will understand how much salt to put or depending on where you get the vegetables etc., then how you cook, depending on your skill. That is the **understanding part**, you don't **become rigid**, you don't become **knowledge based or** thought based, otherwise you may go and argue with others via saying, 'the manual say cook like that, you know? Why you go and put so much of this and that?' Even though the same brand sometimes the quality may not be the same. Do you understand? That's why you may buy from different batches, the different types of product, but for the person who cooks, the moment he smell them, he will know already, this is not the one they use to have. That's why your **skill and your understanding will make the difference**. So, when you have all these understanding, you **are not gullible**. You don't look for

knowledge from others or the books, instead you observe and you understand, then you try it out. The trying it out is very important, you must do it until it has become a part of you, until you become very skilful, until you don't need anything to guide you anymore. It is like the object of meditation, initially it is **a skilful mean** to assist you to train; to anchor the mind. After that, if you still use it, you cannot progress. That's why all these *objects of meditation* later on you must *relinquish them*; even the chanting, you have to relinquish so that the awareness within is always there. That's why there is no one to chant. The awareness is with the chanting as one; nobody behind. It is the same for Anapanasati, you develop it **until the very subtle breathing also cease**, then **no need to do already because your mind already enters sati**. During that time, *whatever you see, you are in sati, whatever you smell, taste, and tactilely feel you are in sati. So, that mind is different already*. You must have the **stability of mindfulness** to have *that ability*. Otherwise you cannot understand what those cultivators are trying to share with you. I realized most of you have not really understood that part. That's the *reason why you all keep getting caught in the vicious cycle, trapped inside there*, due to your *old habitual thinking* - you are *too eager to know*. Do you understand? That was what happened to Sister Padmasuri last time but now she is already different, she no longer has that problem. *Too eager to progress may also be a problem because it's like one becomes very anxious, - wants to have the progress but cannot, then inside said, 'wah, I tried so hard, I did so much but still not there yet'*. To awaken you

cannot have this type of **craving** inside your mind, do you understand? The thought that has the desire to progress, to be awoken is **a craving** – so it cannot happen because to awaken the appropriate conditions have to unfold. That’s why you **just do** diligently, sincerely with faith and **don’t try to know**. *Then when all the conditions are there*, all of a sudden, **you will understand**. Then when your **daily mindfulness** is **firmly established**, *you will see a lot of things that you have never seen before*. You will see your **subtle mental intention** clearly, you can *also see how your saṅkhāra arise and pass away*, how upon *contact feeling arise to condition craving* if there is no *yoniso manasikara* (or wise-attention) at the moment of sense experiences. You can be with the moment of feeling, attention (or perception), *sankhara activities* etc. After that no need to do anything, it is just like that all the time. Then the whole TV programme and the phenomena world, **your awareness** will just flow with it. Everything *is like a flow* (**specific phenomena awareness**). That’s why you can see the **physical flow**, the **mental flow** and **nature’s flow**. Everything is just a flow in that state of awareness – most of the time it is in **specific phenomena awareness**, then once a while it is in **spacious awareness** *without a centre*. Your mind is just like that, that’s why there is **no dwelling**.

So, *first train your mind until no thought*. If this “no thought” state also you **cannot arise**, it means you are still not ready to develop the meditation as yet because you **have yet to realise your true mind** (silent mind). *When you are most of the time*

aware (ever mindful), it means most of the time you are **without** thought. You are just aware, then when you perceive, you aware, then thought may arise, but it stops there, after that **it doesn't proliferate anymore**. Then you continue with your **daily life**, thought will arise, but immediately after that, it does **not proliferate anymore** because **of your wisdom** and **understanding** and it **doesn't move like before anymore**. Then it is **always with the moment in pure awareness more and more, more and more**. Previously **before** you have the **mindfulness developed you tend to think ahead**. You tend to think of many things and **you are hardly aware** because you are **too busy thinking, planning and worrying about life most of the time**. You think of your problems, worries about them and you also plan to do all those unfinished business that **you have given importance to**. Then your conditioned thinking; let's say when you are at home, you say, 'ya, I need to go upstairs to take something', then it conditioned you to walk towards the staircase but as you do that you are **not aware** of your walking and instead **you are thinking and heedlessly loss in thoughts** and you are **not aware of what you are doing**. That thought conditioned you to go upstairs, then as your body turns to go upstairs, you are **not aware**, you **are still thinking**, then when you reach the staircase, your thought ask, "why am I here". Then you recall, 'oh, I am supposed to do something, that's why I am here'. You are **not mindful**. When you are mindful, all these things **cannot happen**. Because **you are with the moment**, but when your **thoughts are ahead of your action and activities**, that's how you **become heedless and you think**

a lot. And the thought is ever **proliferating** ahead of your action and you are *hardly aware* because you are **not mindful**, you think a lot. Human being's problem is they are *too busy thinking, planning and worrying about life*. They are never with the moment to truly live life, to be aware of what is happening within the moment. That's why I always advice, whatever you need to do, **write it down** so that you **don't have to use so much memory**; so that you *don't have to retrieve it through the memory via your thinking*. Just write it down, very simple. Then the mind doesn't have to worry about it, because it is already written down and you won't forget. Do you understand? What are the things you need to do, you just write it down. Then it saves you a lot of memory because no need to remember anything. Then *when your brain doesn't register*, it means **your brain has space**. Like this table, if I don't have anything on the table, or like this altar (the last time I commented) it was **very crowded with the offerings**, the *fruits and all those things*, until you can't move around it, there is there is no space at all. And do you know what all these items are? These are equivalent to your **rites and rituals, belief system**, your **"pantang"** and your **superstitions**, etc. Just like those 'pantang' that your mother might have said to you: 'you cannot do this, cannot do that, and on the 7th lunar month of the Chinese calendar you cannot go out because it is the **hungry ghosts festival** and so on'. So, these things *create fear in you*. Next week is the 7th Chinese lunar month and that is the month when all the hell beings are being released and you believe that, so your memory of what your mum told you will

put fear in you and with that you tend to put fear into others too due to your this ‘pantang’ or belief. That’s why you have fear. When you accumulate all these things that you are holding on in your brain, in your mind, ***you don’t have space and since thoughts are response to memories you will think a lot until there is hardly any space between your proliferating thoughts*** because you ***lack mindfulness***.

It become worse if you also ***accumulate*** all your ***psychological fears, worries, anxiety, misery, sadness, sorrow and lamentation, your problems, insecurity, and your scars of memory, etc.*** - you deposit and cling onto all these things in your memory. And since ***thoughts are response to memory***, these ***wrong thoughts*** will keep on arising to haunt you. That’s why if you ***don’t straighten your views and clear off all these rubbish through the daily mindfulness’s direct seeing or wisdom***, your brain ***will not have space*** because you will cling and hold on to all these things via your delusion. The memory can be there, but they are not on the table (i.e. your mind is not clinging on to them). Do you understand? Your brain is free to move. The mind that understands doesn’t have rites and rituals, “pantang”, belief system, etc. - it is just aware. Thing is just the way it is. You just manifest, move, freely, without restriction, no need to worry about this and that and who says what. You just ***act according to wisdom and understanding via following the Noble Eightfold Path***. If I have right view, I will do the right thing. If I don’t have right view, I will do the wrong thing. That’s why the ***user of thought*** is ***very important***.

Without right view, without wisdom, you don't know how to use thought. Then there is delusion. That's why all the thought becomes **wrong thought** because the **user of thought is deluded**. That's why the ego, the selfishness, the emotion, the anger, the hatred, the fear, the worry, the anxiety, all these exist because of the "atta" or ego. Without the "atta", who is having fear? Nobody right? Who is selfish? Nobody and there is nothing! It is just a form and mind for me to use, so I use it. There is **no more about me**, it's about **the law of Karma**, that's why this one (the **form and mind**) **has a duty because it is subject to karma, so it cannot simply do things**.

Am I violating the law of Karma? If so, the karmic nature is affected, then this form and mind will have to inherit all those karmic things because you are born of it, heir to it, conditioned and supported by it. This is wisdom, this is right understanding. So, you act according to **wisdom**, not with your **memory**, which are your conditionings, your fear, your worry, your anxiety and all those rubbish. That's why there must be space (or awareness), space between thought. When there is space, there is freedom. When there is space, there is no thought. No thought means no fear, no anxiety, no sorrow and no lamentation. Then there is peace, there is tranquillity, there is stillness, there is clarity, there is understanding. That's why this one can awaken. This one *can insight into the 3 characteristics of nature*.

I have just sent out the transcript done by my daughter for our last Thursday class's sharing. It is all there and when you read through it with understanding, reflect and contemplate until very, very clear, until you understand it clearly then you just do. Don't ask any more questions after that. Not to say you cannot ask, you can ask, but **only ask after you have done the cultivation correctly** otherwise **you will continue to get trap in the same way**. Ask means, ask those questions which are **relevant** to cultivation. When you have already **understood the cultivation**, **you just go ahead and cultivate**. Then as you cultivate you will encounter other types of questions. Those questions are more useful and relevant, just like Sister Adeline's question just now. Because she has done that cultivation, then she wants to **understand how to overcome duality**. Do you understand? Her **daily mindfulness** is already established. What she need is the wisdom part. That's why I explained just now – duality is to be understood. When you have understood via the direct seeing you don't have to do anything. You **only need to develop the wisdom** to understand that this **duality pertains** to the **mundane world**. Just like what I had explained just now. Duality is for the mundane world, the **condition arising world** because this is created by the **mundane mind**. So **within the mundane mind, the conditioned world, duality exists, and you have to accept that fact**. People will talk that way; human beings will behave that way. They will arise all these but when you know these are dualities, convention of society, of living beings who don't have the wisdom and the Dharma understanding then you can be free

from it because if *you already have the wisdom*, then, *this duality doesn't apply to you*. Do you understand? **People are just the way they are**, that's why **only wisdom frees**. Then you are **not attached** to duality because you understand that Right and wrong are convention of society. **When I can see things as they are, accept them for what they are, my mind is free**. The world is the world. Human beings are just the way they are. **With this understanding (which is wisdom)**, my **mind liberates** from **duality**. This is the *second aspect of the middle way*.

You can **transcend duality** because the **wisdom will allow you not to be caught within the phenomena world of existence created by the mundane mind through delusion**. So, you will know **how to use** the *form and mind*, because **it is for you to use** for **you know this is not real, not you**. That's why you can use it accordingly and you will also know how to do your duties with it. This is **what enlightenment** is all about. That's why when they cultivate correctly, they will come to **understand this part** which *most of them haven't understood* yet; that's why they can ask this type of question, which is a correct question. But if you don't have the **initial cultivation** of the *daily mindfulness*, you cannot ask this type of question. You haven't reached the cultivation to ask this question. That's why it is the same for Sister Eng Bee, - after reading my earlier outline short notes, she can ask regarding the Noble Eightfold Path cultivation concerning the **mundane cultivation leading to the realisation of the supra mundane**. That's why they can ask these types of questions. And **both of them** are *doing the*

daily mindfulness. They *have done it until their daily mindfulness is already **very stable*** (for quite a while already). If you don't believe, you can go and ask them. So, this is how the cultivation differs; when you understand, you just work on it, then you will progress, become different and you will transform. But when you **don't understand**, you will *continuously entangle yourself* within the **same cocoon of non-understanding** because *you cannot break free*. So, listen to it, reflect, contemplate, write it down, understand them and then just do. All these are the **same messages** that I have given to you all since the early days until now. It is the same message, because if you have the understanding, my nature will know. My nature will further advise you how to develop the cultivation after that.

So, **work on the daily mindfulness. Get it right**, then after that **you will ask different questions**. After that you will come and thank me for what I have advised you. That **daily mindfulness** once **stabilizes** you will become **completely different**. Your **knowledge is all gone**, because you **now can see different things**. Your mindfulness will *allow you to see a lot of things, because your mind has become very sensitive, fully aware, then all of the mental intentions, everything else like starts to slow down, your thought processes, your saṅkhāra activities **too will like slow down; otherwise, you cannot progress***. What is progress? The **Dependent Origination's** first two links of **avijjā paccaya saṅkhāra**; what is avijjā? **Avijjā is ignorance**. What is ignorance? *Not understanding the truth, isn't it?* So,

dependent on ignorance, what arise? Saṅkhāra! What is saṅkhāra? Yes, **mental activities**; you think a lot because you don't understand. Wanting to know, wanting to experience, you think. That's why as long as this avijja link is **not weaken**, you **cannot be mindful in the midst of life**, do you understand? That's why you **need to straighten your view**. First is through **Pariyatti – understanding the teaching**. So that you know what memory is, what the psychological memory is, *what are the things that you accumulate*, that **cause you to have this heedless thinking?** Then *the essential Dharma* which I had explained to you - because you lacked the **five spiritual faculties**, the five **mental hindrances** keep on arising **to stir your mind** and make you **heedless**. That's why **saṅkhāra continuously arise**. So, what you are suppose to do in meditation is **to train your mind to de-condition this heedless thinking**. This means you have to work on the **five spiritual faculties** because *when the spiritual faculties are there, the hindrances are gone*. But *this is what most people cannot do* because they **cannot get the sati right**. They can get saddhā and vīriya right, but *for sati they cannot get it right*. So, they need to **work on sati**. That's why all the training *whether mind sweeping method, anapanasati, the chanting and the bowing, etc. is to train the daily mindfulness, to anchor the mind, then stabilize it until it's part of you, until you are ever mindful in the midst of life*. That part you have **not done**. That's why **you cannot understand**. You have to do that. Once that one is done, your **views will all change** because *you can see things very clearly now. You can put the Dhamma to test. Dhammapada*

verses 1 and 2, will stand up to investigation very clearly. So, I have to avoid Dhammapada verse 1 and be heedful to follow Dhammapada verse 2. Then I have to arise the four right efforts to purify. Otherwise your evil roots of greed, hatred and delusion, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action will continue to arise. That's why you must have the **right efforts to abandon and to prevent it from arising**. When you are **not mindful**, you **cannot prevent it from arising**. It's only when you **have understood what the evil roots are** - what is **greed**, what is **hatred**, what is **delusion** – and **understand all these very clearly**, then in the **daily life** you can **see them**, then **only you can develop the ability to abandon them**. How to abandon them? There are **five ways as taught by the Buddha**. The **meditative way**, which are the **third and the fourth ways are most effective**; so do it. Then your mind will become different. Do you understand? Then, whenever anger arises, **you understand anger is not you** because it is **condition arising**. So, try it out. Go in and **silent your mind** and **stay with the anger**. Then when it ceases, you will understand. No wonder the Buddha said **anger is not me** because **anger is dependent originating**. Then you have **to trace the origination factors**. How did you get angry? It's from your senses, from your memory, **then how to reverse it?** You have to have the **right view borne of seeing things as they are**. What does it mean? Can you **accept them for what they are?** Then the next time, you see people whom you don't like, your mind **doesn't stir anymore**. Do you understand? This is **how you straighten your view**. When you **have less and less of these mental hindrances**,

your mind will not stir like before, you become more and more calm, more and more peaceful, then you will have more and more clarity, less and less of these wrong thought – saṅkhāra. That's how you improve and progress. When your **daily mindfulness** improves and stabilises, your thoughts will become less. "Avijja paccaya saṅkhāra" link is **weakened and attenuated**. That's how you progress; **not by asking question like am I doing it right?** If I am equally gullible like those other teachers who don't have the awakening then I may also like some of them comment by saying that you have done well, then you will **also become gullible**. Do you understand? Sometimes you will also quote your teacher saying that you have already reached such and such level of Jhana or level of insight knowledge (nana) and you have already done well (up to this nana or level already). **Forget about all these rubbish**. Do you understand? Are you **really living the life of a Noble one** with the **embodiment** of those **Noble Eightfold Path factors?** If you still don't have any of these, it means you are still far away in your cultivation. You **cannot even maintain** your right thought, right speech, right action and the right livelihood in **the midst of life**; you **cannot even develop the stability** of mindfulness to cultivate the **four foundations of mindfulness in the midst of life**, which means you are nowhere near to enlightenment. **Without** all these, your **enlightenment factors cannot come about**. These **seven factors** of **enlightenment**, the **main ones** will keep arising if you have done it correctly. If you are **not mindful**, you **don't have sati** (the mindfulness), then you obviously **cannot investigate**

Dhamma (Dhammavicaya), do you understand? When you **cannot investigate Dharma**, you **cannot** have **vīriya** to drive you; because it *doesn't stand up to investigation* and you *cannot understand*. But when you have **sati (1st factor of enlightenment)** to **investigate into Dhamma (dhammavicaya – the 2nd factor of enlightenment)** and it **stands up to investigation**, then you will come to realize that the Buddha's teaching is **so beautiful** then your **vīriya (3rd enlightenment factor)** will arise. That's how the 5 spiritual faculties can bring about the **seven factors of enlightenment**, starting with **Sati**, then **Dhammavicaya**, then after that your *faith strengthens*, then **vīriya arises** and when there is vīriya, you will continue to **cultivate diligently**, then **pīti** (the 4th enlightenment factor) arises; then when **pīti** arises, *if you continue to relax and silent*, **passadhi (the 5th enlightenment factor)** will arise. Of course you may also go through **sukkha** (blissfulness of mind). **Passadhi** is the silent mind, which you must develop, the stability of mind, the silent or meditative mind, the true mind. Then with passadhi developed, you will experience the *tranquillity and stillness of mind leading to the realisation of the true mind*. Then when it's connected, your whole **understanding** becomes different. After that you can **stabilize** that *passadhi* until **Samadhi** (the 6th enlightenment factor) arise. Until this **mind is unwavering and collected**. Then, *in the midst of life, at the moment of seeing, hearing, tasting, smell, tactile and thought process, whatever that arise through your sense door consciousness, this Samadhi will prevent it from stirring and reacting*. That's why it **can stay there, observe,**

see things as they are, the reality of what it is, there are no words, then it just understands. One day, when you have reflected and contemplated enough, your stability of this ***second turning wisdom*** is ***already established, it will awaken.*** Then ***suddenly you will be able to insight into phenomena.*** The 3 universal characteristics of annica, dukkha and anatta will suddenly be very clear to you. Everything in this condition world, every phenomena (May it be ***physical, mental or nature's phenomena***), - they all exhibit these ***3 universal characteristics***. Then you ***start to see very clearly*** that *every phenomenon is like that, everything is like that, both within and without. That's how you awaken.* Otherwise, you ***cannot understand.*** This type of understanding is very important. Which means from that understanding of what meditation is, you just work on it. ***Just do and don't try to know, okay?***

This important understanding of the cultivation is not only for you, it's for ***everybody***. Especially for those who have ***not yet develop the stability of daily mindfulness.*** This ***way is not difficult*** if you give it a try. But, it demands a lot of ***sincerity and hard work, which means diligent, faith and perseverance; meanings don't be afraid of failure, do you understand?*** Failure is very common. Everybody also needs to start from somewhere. You look at ***Thomas Edison***, how did he ***discover electricity?*** He failed almost a thousand times. He tried everything and every time he failed he continue to persevere. Then finally he hit it right because he was waiting for the lightning to strike and then he realized that the lightning flash

is actually electricity. That's how he discovered electricity. Do you think it is easy to discover electricity? How many of you are science students? No body? Now I ask you a question: 'if you don't have your text book, your physics book to help you and you have to go by first principle to find out for yourself such a thing as electricity. To generate electricity also you don't know because this thing is not known before Thomas Edison's time. Do you understand? I can tell you **it is not easy to discover electricity**. That's why you need people with **inquiry mind**, - because he saw the lightning, he saw the light flashes through. Then he knew it went down somewhere. That's why he tried, then he became successful. Then he came to realize that electricity can be generated via **magnetic field and copper wires** and later how he created the generator to generate electricity. How through the battery you can also create electricity and so on. This is science, do you understand? So, it is more or less the same for **spiritual cultivation**. When you inquire, when you develop the mind that has this ability to be aware, it **can understand many things**. That's why those with the spiritual understanding, they can progress further. Way, way beyond and that's why the **Bodhisattva way is a very, very extensive cultivation**. What you have learnt is just the handful of leaves, enough for normal saint hood way enlightenment.

That day, who was the one who ask me about the **handful of leaves?** Yes, it was *Brother Song*, the question was very good. The handful of leaves is just the **essential Dharma** needed to

awaken the normal living being to the sainthood way, to realize up till arahant stage. ***Beyond the handful of leaves cultivation***, is the ***Bodhisattva way*** leading to the ***perfection of cultivation*** to realize Sammasam Buddhahood. These are like the ***leaves on the trees*** in the ***forest*** and ***comparatively*** the ***handful is very easy to cultivate, not that difficult***. But the other way is ***very extensive*** and ***very comprehensive*** and ***it looks very difficult, but when you understand it is not difficult***. When you ***understand your vows will take you along***, your ***affinity*** with the ***great beings*** and ***their vows will take you along***. And what you ***only need*** is to have ***sincerity, faith*** and ***perseverance***, and then everything flows. That's why I said ***don't try to know, just do***. Initially ***plant the seed of Bodhi, determine strongly*** to have that understanding, to have that ***Bodhi mind***, so that ***this Bodhi mind*** when it is ***strongly planted***, it will ***take deep root***. Then, every life you arise ***because of these vows planted*** via your ***first stage of Bodhi mind development***, it will ***recall all of your vows, your right views, and whatever aspirations that you have made***. Then every life you come, whether there is the sāsana or no sāsana, ***these understanding are always there***. This is ***what you need to do this life*** so that ***you won't miss this window***, so that all of ***your future life's coming will be taken care of***. And you are so lucky to have this teaching. That's why if you allow this minute window to slip by, I can tell you, you have to wait very, very long, as stated by the ***opening verses for starting a sutra***. For 5 hundred million eons, you may not come across this true

teaching. It is not easy. Okay? I think we have to end early today as I am supposed to attend a dinner this evening.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Now, let us recall to mind all of the wholesomeness that we have developed. We shall ***now share*** and ***dedicate all these merits*** to all ***beings, starting with the deva***. (Closing puja chanting

3.4. Lesson's outline Short Notes prepared after the class.

Outline short notes for lesson 75 of the 6th Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra dated 27.5.2018

Continue from Page 382 Chapter X - Final Instructions:

1. The **Self Nature** is the **Oneness**, *source of everything*. ***Originally***, *there is nothing, where can the dust alight?*
2. "Dust" here means *defilement or unwholesome mind states*. It arises because of **duality** *created by the mundane mind via words, concept and idea*. The mundane mind creates the "duality" of good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, right and wrong, etc. It is ***impossible to then use the mundane mind to do away with such dualities*** because the ***mundane mind is fighting its own creation*** which always comes as a pair; meaning ***if one does not create then things are just the way they are – no right, no wrong and no good and no bad***.

3. If the ***mundane mind*** does ***not create duality*** via ***delusion***, then the ***true mind*** can see things as they are.
4. We must learn to ***use the mundane mind*** and yet ***not be deceived*** or ***deluded*** by it.
5. Do not waste time on ***tainted merit***. Instead, work towards ***awakening via the silent mind***.
6. Story of Bodhidharma transmitting the dharma from India to China was shared by Brother Teoh.
7. ***Enlightenment*** is ***to awaken to the self-nature or true-nature***. It is ***not*** about ***just sitting*** without ***understanding***.
8. Start from basic, i.e. understand that ***everything arises*** from the ***self-nature, including the mundane mind***. For ***Mind is the forerunner of all things, when mind arises, everything arises***. Whether something is wholesome or unwholesome (duality), they all arise from the mundane mind.
9. There is a ***nature*** that is ***independent of thinking***. All beings are ***connected*** to the ***self-nature*** which ***is never born***; hence it ***doesn't*** get sick, get old or die for this is the ***eternal nature***.
10. When one ***understands*** this, one will ***be able to cultivate*** and ***meditate*** accordingly. If one does not understand, then ***one is just following instructions blindly***. Meditation is not about whether one is doing it ***right or wrong*** but

one ***must understand*** what ***one is doing*** in the ***name of cultivation and meditation***.

11. The mundane mind needs to be trained via mindfulness ***to realize*** the ***true mind (silent mind)***.
12. Not until there is mindfulness, there is ***no real meditation*** leading to wisdom.
13. Just relax and be silent. Develop the ***5 spiritual faculties*** to overcome the ***5 mental hindrances*** first. If there is still thinking, it's ***because sati is lacking*** and ***the untrained mind is heedless***. Accept it and just be aware.
14. Use the ***heart (awareness within)*** to be ***aware of external things (observe without views, opinions and thought)***, ***learn to see things as they are***. Be ***with the moment*** in ***silent awareness more and more***.
15. Don't be ***too eager*** to know ***about ones progress*** because that itself ***is a form of craving***. If you ***have cultivated correctly*** then conditions will unfold naturally.
16. In the ***midst of life***, cultivate the ***daily mindfulness***, i.e. learn to see the ***physical, mental and nature's flow within nature***. If there is ***mindfulness*** ***thoughts will not arise*** but when ***thoughts do arise just be aware*** and ***do not allow it to continue*** or ***proliferate*** into a chain of ***heedless thinking***.
17. ***Thinking ahead*** while doing ***our intended*** bodily actions or movements is ***not being mindful at all***. Try doing ***one***

thing at a time with **full awareness**. Be **with the moment** in **silent awareness** more and more so that this **heedless thinking** will be reduced. Learn to live life instead of always thinking, planning and worrying about life.

18. Try **not to accumulate via memory** so that the **brain has space**. Especially those **psychological memories like your fear, worry, anxiety, phobias, scars of memories, insecurities, etc.** Instead, jot them down so as to be free from the need to use memory. **No thoughts** mean *no worries, no fear, no restlessness, and no anxiety etc.*
19. **Tranquility, silence and clarity of mind leads us to see things as they are;** leading to **wisdom**.
20. *When there is awakening, the **wisdom that arises** will be **connected** to the form and mind.* The form and mind (or human being) is **no longer deluded**; one can then say it has *become enlightened*. However, this form and mind is **not you** and *it is still subject to the law of Karma*. This **must be understood** so that **one can cultivate correctly**.
21. Enlightenment has nothing to do with whether one has *completely exhausted ones bad Karma or not?*
22. 2 aspects of the **Middle Path are:** i) to avoid the **2 extremes** of **self-mortification** and **sensual indulgence**; and ii) to **transcend duality via wisdom**. **Duality is to be understood**. *Duality pertains to the conditioned world.*
23. **Ignorance** leads to **heedless thinking** (Avijja paccaya sankhara). Be **aware** of these *mental activities via*

mindfulness to develop **wisdom** to **straighten ones views** so that one can **weaken such heedless thinking**.

24. The real meditation will always bring one back to the **cultivation** of the **Noble Eightfold Path** which is the *meditation as taught by the Buddha*. Always reflect and contemplate until the **dharma is very clear**.
25. The 1st and 2nd Noble Truths are the **mundane aspect** of life.
26. **1st Noble Truth** explains the **reality of life and existence**, i.e. the **8 realities** leading to dukkha *if one lack wisdom*. The **prevalence of suffering** if one confronts them **without** proper understanding.
27. **2nd Noble Truth** – the *cause of suffering* is **craving borne of delusion**.
28. **3rd noble truth** – Suffering **need not be**. Nibbana can be realized in the here and the now.
29. **4th noble truth** – cultivates the N8FP (**mundane** cultivation) leading to the *realization of the supra mundane*.
30. **Question by Sister Adeline:** *Can Bro Teoh explains how can one overcome or transcend duality* in cultivation?
31. **Question by Sister Eng Bee:** According to Bro Teoh N8FP still have duality right? Reason why Bro Teoh said in the last Tuesday and Thursday classes that the **4th Noble**

Truth is about **cultivating the N8FP** (mundane cultivation) **leading to the supra mundane** which is the **realization of Nibbana**. Can Bro Teoh explain this further?

32. **Question by Sister Lee:** What does one need to do once the **silent mind** cultivation has been developed?

(Above draft outline short notes was prepared by Sister Mun Yuen)

End.