**Outline short notes for Bro Teoh's Sunday class dated 8 December 2019** The Path to Truth for the Modern-day Bodhisattva Practitioner by Master Shih Cheng Yen, page 32-35.

1. **3 phases of Dharma** as taught by the Buddha: Phase 1 - **Pariyatti** (Learning of the Teachings) – theory (through listening and reading)

Phase 2 - **Patipatti** (Cultivating the Teachings) – practical aspect.

Phase 3 - **Pativedha** (Fruition of your hard work) – **living** the **noble life** of an enlightened being (most meaningful & beautiful phase)

1. Tzu Chi's approach is **slightly different** from the above because it **does not** emphasize on **cultivation first**. As many people find the sutras **too profound** to understand, Tzu Chi’s **way of cultivation** is through **compassion in action** instead. It **brings volunteers** down to **society’s level to help**, during times of **calamities and crisis**, to **see** and **witness** the reality of life and **to understand suffering** through direct experiencing. In this way, when the volunteers hear the sutras later, they will be able **to relate** the Teachings to real life situation.
2. In this way too, Tzu Chi volunteers **cultivate gratitude, love** and **compassion**.
3. According to Brother Teoh, combining the **2 approaches above** is most fruitful. Then, after we have awakened, we can **again return** to volunteer at Tzu Chi to have a different experience.
4. **Even though** everything **is non-self,** **impermanence** and **suffering**, there **is still such a thing as life**.
5. The **Four Noble Truths** (4NTs) are the **essence** of the Buddha's Teachings. If the **4NTs** are **understood**, one can **act, speak** and **think like** a Noble One. One will be **heedful,** able to apply the **4 Right Efforts**, carry the **embodiment** of all the **Noble Eightfold Path factors** and have the clear **understanding** of both the mundane and the supramundane life.
6. The **collective consciousness** only needs to have **about 1%** of **virtuous persons** within it to turn it around thereby **transforming society** for the better.
7. The **human psyche** which consists of **mainly Greed, Hatred & Fear** can trigger off **wars** and **natural disaster** to wipe out certain **heedless** people in order for **mother nature to heal**.
8. The **individual must change** for the **collective consciousness** (summation of all the individuals' consciousness) **to change.**
9. **Act with wisdom**, i.e. with **right view** so that **we can arise** the **appropriate** right actions and speeches accordingly. Apply the **4 right efforts** to root out evil, develop virtue, leading to reduced negative tendencies.
10. **Cultivate** the **4 foundations of mindfulness.** A stable sati will cumulate into samadhi to enable one to see things as they are, to awaken to the truth and eventually transformed to have the embodiment of the Noble Eightfold Path.
11. **Acting according to memory** is **not acting** at all (or wrong action). Only wisdom frees the mind.
12. Cultivate **affinity** with the all the **great beings’ nature** (all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) by **paying respect, making offerings, chanting** their **mantra,** having **gratitude** and **seek** their **continuous guidance, blessing** and **protection.**
13. Heedfulness is when the mind is **ever mindful** and **constantly meditative**. The mind is **just aware** and **tranquil.** There is **clarity** and **one can see things as they are**. One will awaken and understand a lot of things. One **meditates** with the **true mind**. One **does not meditate** with the thought. The thought can never let you understand the Dharma which is beyond thought and time. That is why we cannot use thought as an instrument to meditate. The thought will limit you. Thought cannot give you the understanding. **Thought can only give rise to knowledge**.
14. Sister Alicia shares her meditation experience by reporting, she feels **very relax** and **like want to sleep** while **listening** to Brother Teoh's **Dharma talk recently.** Brother Teoh relates, when she said, she was **very relaxed,** that is **good**, and if it makes **her wants to sleep**, **just sleep** and **don’t try to know**. Sister Alicia also **felt lots of vibration** and **movement/activities** at her **heart area.** Brother Teoh said Yes, these vibrations **will slow down** and become **very quiet and still**. Sister Alicia went on to shared that when she came out from the meditation, **she starts to slowly learn** how to **perceive** again. Brother Teoh said, that is **very good** and **explained:** when Sister Alicia came out from her meditation, her form and mind **became alive** again, where **she started** to **learn** how to use her **awareness to trigger off the thought process** again. As if **you start to learn** how to be **aware again**. First is **just aware**, then how the **aggregates** of mind arise and come out. How you start **to perceive** things and all this will be **very clear** to her. Then how she **functions** as a **human being** and how it **operates your senses.** Then how **you become animated** into a human being again. How **you interact** will the **world.** How **you know** the **world** and **how this form and mind** becomes **alive** again. You **can see all this** and that is **what meditation** is all **about.** **Very Good!** And **Maha Sadhu!** According to Alicia, she experiences all this before but at that time she does not understand what was all this, until Bro Teoh explained today. She can see how **her mind become completely quiet** and **still,** how **it returns** to her **true nature** (true mind) and how **she comes out of it**. There **are moments** when it **goes into cessation** where the **pure awareness** also no more. (Sometimes it is just **a glimpse** and sometimes it last longer, it depends). After that, she will **understand how her mind** is **stirred**, how she **perceives** and **understands things**, how **defilements come** in and **distract her** and how **she moves** from her **awareness nature** to arise the **mundane mind again**. All this are **possible** because you are **fully aware.** She will also **understand** why the **5** **aggregates** of **form and mind** is **not her**, **impermanent,** lead to **suffering, empty** and **non-self** and that they are **dependent originating** (causal phenomena), hence **an illusion** with **no reality**. Empty of any **meaning** or **essence.** Not a **permanent unchanging entity**. Whereas the **Buddha nature** is different it is the **unconditioned** and is eternally there. It is an **eternal nature** which **was never born**, therefore never dies. It will **not experience** old age, sickness and death like the **physical body**. **When one meditates** with the **silent mind**, one will **understand** all these. **Sadhu!** And **very good.**
15. Sister Alicia also shared that there is a **great being’s chanting** (Fo Hau) that emerged from inside her heart area while she was working in front of the computer. She asked **how can she make use** of it to **cultivate.** Bro Teoh explained, Sister Alicia must have developed her ability from her **past cultivation**. Bro Teoh **advised** Sister Alicia to **just remain aware,** and **be** with the **chanting** until the **awareness** and the **chanting** moves as one, for her to **realize** thatthere is **no one** chanting. The chanting can also build up the **5 spiritual faculties.** That is how the Mahayana practitioners train their mind.
16. Normal **unenlightened living beings** will have the **5 mental hindrances**, which can **condition habitual** **heedless thinking** as a way of life. This is how beings become heedless. If they cultivate the opposite **5 spiritual faculties** and **awaken**, then no matter what happen, they will **not be affected** or **distracted** by the **external phenomena world**. They are ever mindful, heedful, with clarity and wisdom.
17. Sister **Eng Bee** shared her experience where her **particular friend** called her after she has the **thought of hearing** from **her.** However, when Sister Eng Bee received the call from her friend, **her awareness** was **like frozen** but she was **not excited**. She continued with her daily activities and only returned call when she was free. Sister Eng Bee also experienced **an awareness** of **not knowing** where she was within that instant of awareness. Brother Teoh explained that Sister Eng Bee was **experiencing** a moment of **pure awareness** without **an egoic thought** thus realizing the **no mark** of a being within, at that moment.
18. A new comer, Sister Foong expressed **her surprise** of seeing **lying down meditation** in Brother Teoh's class. Brother Teoh explained that meditation can be done in **all postures**. Lying down meditation is the **most relaxed posture** to **maintain awareness**.

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