

25th January 2018 Thursday class short notes

Audio mp3 : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180125.mp3>

Whiteboard Note : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/Teoh-Thu-180125.jpeg>

1. Bro Teoh stressed the **importance of puja** (the *Buddhist devotional practices*), to help develop the **faith** leading to a **calm** and **composed mind**. Besides, if puja is *done with understanding*, the merits are **immeasurable**. Brother Teoh also explained the **significance** of all the *various types of puja offerings offered*. Their significance and meanings are also stated on page 5 of the Puja chanting book. Offering of flowers is to help us see the *impermanent nature* of our **physical body** thereby reminding us of the **urgency in cultivation** to help us progress along the path of dharma.
2. As Buddhists, we are **very fortunate** to have the Buddha as our teacher because He is the **wisest** and **most virtuous human being** ever born during his time (about 2600 years ago). His *teaching* has the **great potential** to *transform and improve* living beings lives. With the *understanding and wisdom* developed through cultivating His teaching, we will **not suffer** anymore because we can *have the understanding* to *live the good life* with a **calm** and **peaceful mind**. As we continue to cultivate, we *can even awaken* to the **universal truth** that are *inherent within nature*. Everything that arises exhibit these 3 *powerful universal characteristics* of *impermanence* (for everything is in a state of flux), *non-self* and *suffering state* which are **inherent** in all things. So, if we **attach** to any phenomena in this world via wanting things our way, suffering will be the result.
3. There are **5 nature's laws or orders** that *govern all of life and existence* in this entire universe. The first two are **scientific laws**, *Utu Niyama and Bija Niyama*. The next three are **spiritual laws** namely *Law of Karma, Law of Mind and the Law of Dharma*. If we understand these laws, we will understand how to live the *spiritual life* well. Then, *life becomes beautiful* because **suffering will cease to be**. As we cultivate the meditation as taught by the Buddha, we will come to know that living beings have **two minds**, the **mundane mind** and the **true mind**. If the **user of thought** or the **mundane** mind is **evil** (or *deluded*) then thoughts become evil, it *will lead* to **karmic downfall**. Hence, we *should take care of karma* and *not blame people* for whatever that happens to us.
4. Bro Teoh **emphasized** the **importance of taking care of the body too** but we **should not be attached** to it. Instead, *take good care of it* so that it *can serve us longer*. Bro Teoh also quoted his *teacher's famous advice*: 'If the body can talk, it will say to you, 'Oh master, harm me not, for I'm only tissues and cells. Have me work for you for the good of yourself and the many before I'm too old, too sick, too weak and too fragile to do anything for you.' Hence, we should see the **urgency to cultivate** diligently before the body gets too old and sick for us to do so.
5. Bro Teoh related *certain experiences* regarding the **dharma that unfolds** via showing us *important signs* that can help us **realize** that *we should just accord and flow with conditions that arise and let nature take its course*. What is meant to be, will be. On the contrary, what is not meant to be, will not be. So,

whatever that happens, we should learn to accept, accord and flow with it. To bring about change we need to introduce the **appropriate new conditions** from *moment to moment via wisdom*.

6. After the meditation session, Bro Eric reported that *he had a lot of thoughts* and his friend Kok Loon felt *sleepy*. Bro Teoh explained the reasons why these *mental hindrances* arose thus **preventing** the mind from *entering the meditative state* of **inner peace** and **inner calmness**. Understand that the *thoughts* are your 'servant' and they are there to serve you. The moment we label via the thoughts whatever mind states that arises, we are giving them **more energy**. Instead, we should not fight or suppress them but just be **aware** and remain **silent** within. **Relax** into **whatever mind states** that arise. When there is no more negativity towards **any sensation**, the *hindrances* will subside and cease on their own.
7. Sleepiness can also arise *when we don't understand the importance of meditation* or sometimes, *the body is tired*. Sensual desires and ill-will are common mental hindrances among new meditators because the *tendency to react* via **habitual tendencies** of likes or dislikes is very dominant throughout the day. Hence, the mind **cannot be silent** but becomes **agitated** and **restless** due to the **constant stirring of the mind** and *thought projection* during every moment of sense experiences then doubts will arise too. When we don't understand the **importance of this type of meditation**, we will lack viriya (or the spiritual zeal) to meditate then we may feel **sleepy** because we are tired. Living beings who are **heedless** and **have not trained** their minds will have these **mental hindrances**. To overcome them, we only need to can cultivate the *opposite* **five spiritual faculties**. We can meditate better if we are **relaxed** and **silent** within. There is no need to do anything because when we **do not suppress or control**, or *create mental hindrances* of likes and dislikes via stirring our mind, **eventually, awareness** (or sati which is a spiritual faculty) will arise by itself because no more mental hindrances. When we give **thought energy** to anything, it will create more and more *craving via thinking* the *wrong thoughts* for us to get drawn into it. The **very flowering of thought** is the **very ending of thought**. So, if we **don't feed it with anymore thought energy**, it will *end on its own* via returning to its **original state** before the stirring.
8. As we continue to cultivate the meditation as taught by the Buddha, our mind will become *more and more quiet* (without thought) and **still** within. We can then carry this **trained mind state** and use it to **live life** more **heedfully** in the *midst of life*. A mind that is **collected** and **unwavering** *does not get drawn* into *situations that arise in life*. This is mind in **Samadhi**. Without Samadhi one can be drawn into life situations which afflict most human beings. Through **memory**, most people will recall their **phobias**, **unhappy** *experiences of life* especially their **scars of memory**. However, memory should be **used properly** to **serve us** instead of using them to store **our psychological memories** (like our phobias, scars of memories and fear etc.) that can **torment us** via arising those **associated wrong thoughts** because *thoughts are response* to those memories. We are the **users of thought** so why do we *allow thoughts to torment us* and *cause us so much suffering*? Instead, we should learn to **recognize** them as **wrong thoughts**. *Wrong thoughts* are **thoughts that condition** our fear, worries, anxiety, sorrow, sadness and lamentation etc. We should reflect on **Byron Katie's 4 lines of questionings** or *approach* to thoughts. Her turn around questions are: i) 'how would we be if we believe those wrong thoughts? And ii) How would we be if we don't think those wrong thoughts?'
9. What is thought? Thought is response to memory. It is just **consciousness** *arising and passing away*. So, why has it so much power over us? It is because we have **given meaning to thoughts** and **project them**

into the **future or recall the past** through *memory to arise the wrong thoughts*. We should learn to be like the computer which uses RAM (random access memory). When memory is needed, we access it. Otherwise, leave it there. Don't be **sentimental** with thoughts especially all those wrong thoughts borne of **psychological memories**. Hence, memory is for us *to remember all the important things*. There is no need **to accumulate** the **scars of memory**. We should have faith in the Buddha and His teaching. When we have the faith and the viriya to develop the *stability of mindfulness*, we will be **more sensitive** and we will know how to arise the right thoughts (of kindness, gentleness, pleasantness, respect, gratitude, generosity, contentment, love and compassion, etc.) leading to a **lot of joy, peace, clarity** and **serenity within** our heart. We will experience **a lot of good positive energy** inside us. *We hold the key to our own life destiny. To be happy or unhappy is entirely our choice. Hence, choose wisely.* When we understand the teaching, we will know how to arise the **right view leading** to the other **Noble 8fold Path factors** to *live life well* and to *overcome all the 8 realities of life*.

10. **Without** the dharma, we can *become 'cuckoo'* especially in today's **fast-paced** society. The Buddha's teaching is evergreen despite the era we are in. We can have a mind **with clarity** to *develop the cultivation until we realize the true mind* to arise the wisdom so as not to be **deceived** by the **phenomenal world**. We **should not blame technology** but *be a good user of technology* instead. Just like Jack Ma who has used *technology wisely*, we can also apply the Noble 8fold Path and use technology to *bring benefits to live in today's world of virtual business*. There is nothing wrong in keeping abreast with technology if we have the ability to **accord and flow** with whatever that arises.
11. The *spiritual faculties* are actually in a way similar to *mundane common sense* when it comes to living life. In life when we are **confidence**, *half the battle is won*. With **confidence** and **diligence**, one can climb the ladder of success. To have *sati or mindfulness* is to have the *clarity of mind to see things clearly* and *make better decision in life*. Then Samadhi is equivalent to a very **strong** and **stable** mind that can allow us to achieve our goal with great success. Then wisdom is understanding.
12. If the **mind is trained, it will listen to us**. It is just like training a dog to listen to us. The thought will listen to us if we know how to make friends with it. However, if we believe the **wrong thoughts**, we end up suffering via our **delusion**.
13. The teaching is **very simple** and **beautiful**. If you can have an **open mind** to listen attentively you will benefit from his great teaching. It will **help change** and **improve** your life for the better.
14. We should always remember the Buddha's advice, '**The heedful never die. The heedless are as if dead.**' So, we should **strive on with heedfulness** because *heedfulness is the path to the deathless*. As we cultivate more **wholesomeness** and **merits** via *our cultivation*, we can also **invoke power of merits** to make **noble aspirations** following nature's law *to help us in our spiritual journey*.

(Note: the above draft short notes were prepared by Puan Chee)

Dated: 29.1.2018