

Short notes for talk on 1st March 2018

Audio mp3 : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180301.mp3>

Whiteboard Note : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-180301.jpg>

1. Today is Chap Goh Meh, the last day of the CNY 2018 celebration. The lunar calendar of the Chinese culture has evolved through careful observation and astronomy. Bro Teoh said, over the last thirty years or so, **civilization has evolved** and progressed very rapidly. With the *understanding of dharma*, life can become **very meaningful** and *beautiful*. Our present Sasana is also **very unique** because this is the **golden era** where the **consciousness has evolved beautifully** and **many cultivators will progress very fast**. Bro Teoh mentioned that while surfing the internet recently, he came across a lot of **wise people** having the ability to share the **rather profound teaching** of **Lao Tzu (Tao Te Ching)**. Nowadays, the consciousness is so developed that people can understand this great teaching. Bro Teoh shared a video on **Master Hsu Yun**. The Master mentioned that when you meditate, behave like a 'dead' person and continue to develop the **silent mind**. Even when thoughts arise, do not worry *but relax* and be **at ease**. This also explains the opening verse of the Heart Sutra: `观自在菩萨 ... When Bodhisattva **at ease** (Avalokiteshvara) was cultivating the *profound prajna paramita*, he *illuminated the five skandhas and saw that they are all empty*, and he *crossed beyond all suffering and difficulty*.' So, the **Bodhisattva is always at ease (自在菩萨)**. Real emptiness is to be awakened to. Technology has *given us the opportunity to listen to such profound teachings*.

2. Bro Teoh emphasized *the need to train the mundane mind* so that we can use the **trained mind** state to *develop the meditation in the midst of life and be aware every moment, every instant from within*. Most human beings are **not conscious of life** but instead they are **constantly lost in thought** most of the time via **thinking, reacting, planning** and **worrying about life**. **Without the dharma**, we **cannot cope with life**. Most people focus and concentrate on what they **want to achieve** through **hard work, striving diligently** to be successful. This is the **mundane way to develop success**. However, the **spiritual approach** is to **train the mind** to **see things clearly** and act via **wisdom** instead of **following what the mind tells us**. **Acting according to memory is not acting** at all because *our accumulated memories are either good or bad*. When we *react to life so often*, these **habitual tendencies will condition us to be heedless thus hindering the mind from entering the meditative state of inner peace and inner calmness**.

3. Bro Eric apologized for turning up late for the class. He mentioned that he was very angry during driving leading him to take the wrong way thus arriving late for the class. Bro Teoh make use of Bro Eric's experience as conditions to share the dharma. When you are angry or unhappy, the evil roots are present, creating conditions for other things to happen. **Without clarity and understanding**, we will make wrong decisions. The **thinking mind reacts very fast** bringing about *negative mind states* that condition *negative karma to arise*. Anger is a very negative emotion. Bro Eric continued to explain that he had not been listening to the dharma for quite some time. Bro Teoh further explained that the habitual tendencies will arise due to long periods of heedless thinking. This will further condition the mind to 'chatter' and get caught in a cocoon of thoughts. When **we are mindful**, we are **sensitive and aware**. So, all these cannot happen. It is important to tell yourself, 'I will never allow these 'evil roots' to arise **no matter what happens**.' Hence, if we are **not mindful**, the *evil roots* will take over. We should bear in mind how to apply the following right effort to abandon the wrong thoughts:

- a) Think of the direct opposite wholesome thought (anger is not you but condition-arising);

- b) Think of the consequence of holding on to those wrong thought;
- c) Silent the mind and maintain awareness (this is the meditative approach);
- d) Trace the origination factors and retrospectively reverse it (the wisdom approach);
- e) Finally, if all these fail, then with your teeth clenched and tongue against the palate, abandon the wrong thought (by sheer will-power).

4. To prevent such wrong thoughts from arising, we should ***straighten our views*** through ***reflection*** and ***contemplation***. When we do this, one day, we can awaken to this wisdom and the mind will not behave in the old way anymore. Then, ***a new way of life takes over***. This becomes ***mindful living*** because even the ***slightest movement*** of the mind ***can be felt***. We must be ***determined to have this mindfulness to be aware***. Then, we can transform from a ***heedless way*** to a ***heedful way of living***. Finally, Bro Teoh reminded us to ask questions because it is the fastest way to learn the dharma because it sets the conditions for dharma to unfold. All of life is dharma and nature is our best and greatest teacher. Nature has its own set of nature's laws so if we know these laws we will know how to live life and we will not get entangled in life.