

## Outline Short notes of Thursday class talk dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Audio : <http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-181011.mp3>

1. Sister Keat Hoon asked three questions as below:

A) How to **prepare for a loved one's death?** - From a **Buddhist perspective.**

B) According to the Buddhist teaching - what is the **concept of death? What is death? Who dies and what dies?**

C) As a Buddhist, how do one **conduct a funeral ritual?**

2. Brother Teoh **continued** with his sharing of the **27<sup>th</sup> September Thursday class outline short notes** regarding **heart** and **mind** before addressing the questions above.

3. The **concept of death – Death is separation of Consciousness from the physical Form.** Three things sustaining life are: a functioning physical body, Consciousness (all the accumulated memories i.e., accumulation of views, opinion, experiences and conditioning) trapped in the physical form and the Karmic or Life force from our karmic nature.

4. When you are brain dead, you lose your **life entity** of who you are. When one has stroke, **one loses brain function** depending on which side of the brain is affected, leading **to inability to function or remember.** Thus the human being is **not real** in that sense and also because it is **impermanent, dependent originating.** To arise **thought consciousness,** the brain is needed because the *brain is where the memory is* leading to arising of thoughts via **response to memory.**

5. The rebirth consciousness is just **one simple consciousness.** That is why when a baby is conceived, and later its sense bases and organs are formed, then the **heart starts to pump** when the **rebirth consciousness** goes in. When rebirth consciousness goes in, this is just *a simple rebirth consciousness* only. Then over the years of conditioning and accumulation of experiences, views and opinion etc. the consciousness evolved into what it is nowadays.

6. **What is death consciousness?** When you are **about to die** usually you are **no longer conscious** and **karmic conditioning** has taken over **unless** you are a cultivator with **very stable mindfulness** and **understanding.** You are **no longer yourself** in this state. If the dying person had committed one of the **five heinous crimes** (garuka kamma) such as **parricide etc.** or developed the **jhánas (ecstasies),** he would experience such a kamma before his death. These are **so powerful** that they **totally eclipse all other actions and appear very vividly** before the mind's eye. If he had done **no such weighty action,** he may take for his object of the **dying thought-process a kamma done immediately before death** (ásanna kamma); which may be called a **"death proximate kamma."** In the absence of a "death proximate kamma" a habitual good or bad act (ációóa kamma) is presented, such as the healing of the sick in the case of a good physician, or the teaching of the Dhamma in the case of a pious teacher, or stealing in the case of a thief. Failing all these, some **casual trivial** good or bad act (katattá kamma) **becomes the object of the dying thought-process.** (Most of the time the Death proximity karma will take over especially the **habitual thing** one constantly do, good or bad, e.g. if you're good at torturing people through wrong livelihood, you will behave like those creatures that you harmed or killed. If you do harm to others, when close proximity karma takes over, your consciousness will develop the **same fear** you do onto others. E.g. if you kill chickens, you will behave like them – the fear they have before they die would be on you too. Similarly if you have constantly done good things and wholesome actions like listening to the dharma, doing dana and kathina, rejoicing, etc. then your Death proximity karmic consciousness will be related to such wholesomeness signifying a good rebirth. This type of **habitual karmic consciousness** will take over. A good example is that of our late Auntie Tan (Dana Queen), wife of ex-BMS president, who had done a lot dana/Kathina and wholesomeness – when her consciousness change or when she are not herself anymore she kept telling the devotees at the hospital that she was having kathina and doing dana here and there. As her parami was very good, on that day a lot of devotees and monks were praying for her recovery, people also shared and transferred merits and performed **Bodhi Puja** for her at Brickfield Buddhist temple. Brother Teoh who was also there doing the Bodhi puja, felt something very strong and powerful at his heart area and he can sense she would recover. True enough, after the puja, she regained consciousness and survived for another 20 over years.

7. There must be conditions for things to arise. The dharma is such, it can only happen when all appropriate conditions fall into place, or else things won't happen. Malaysians are so blessed with such good parami to have such a good PM at this time of need. Without Tun Mahathir, change leading to downfall of the **61 year old ruling party** of our **country can't happen**. Brother Teoh shared that Tun Mahathir has very strong mind (will-power) and he will survive long enough to do the work he wants to do. It is not easy to be PM at his age (94), but with his willpower, he is definitely no ordinary being but a great being with a mission – to lead the world and our country to bring about the higher consciousness and a New Malaysia.

8. When **death proximity consciousness** takes over, you are **no longer in control**. Then “trying to think of good thoughts before you die to have a better rebirth” **won't be possible** or *that easy anymore*. The only thing that can help avoid this condition of the *Karmic death proximity consciousness* from **taking over is to meditate** to develop a **very stable mindfulness**. When you are **heedful** and **aware**, you won't have such thing coming to take over your consciousness because your **awareness which is beyond thought** will be there **to protect and guide** you.

9. When Brother Teoh was 9 years old, he actually died. His **consciousness came out** and **could not go back** to take control of his body, *like it's not his body*. But because he was determined to get back into his body so he gave it a push (*he did not know what makes him do that but somehow he just know what to do*) and he went back into his body. His awareness was there **although** at that time, he *still did not know what meditation was* or anything regarding the dharma as yet. Yet he **was able to be fully aware** of his own **craving force dissipating** thereby **freeing his consciousness** from his body. He also witness how his **full consciousness** came out of his body.

10. The first thing he wanted *to check and confirm* was what he saw when his consciousness was up there (above his body). His brother walked into the room, said something and went out. As he was entering the room, Brother Teoh called out to him but his brother could not hear him. It was the same as the brother walked out. Brother Teoh then realized his body was down there. Thus he wanted to go back to his body. Once he went back into the body, he was **not able to take control of his body at first**. But once he *gave it a push and regained consciousness* and took control of his body again, he straight away ran after his brother *to ask if he did what he did while in the room*. His brother answered yes and asked how come Brother Teoh could know as he was sleeping like a log.

11. Brother Teoh was in that state because he was **too tired** after playing the whole day and his energy was almost **completely drained**. He just collapsed on the bed. As he rested, his **craving force starts to dissipate** – *the craving force that binds the consciousness to the body loses its grip on his body*. Then awhile later, suddenly the three areas of consciousness came back to one and reside at the heart area before coming out.

12. Most people experience only the **astral body** going out, and in **such cases** they can come back anytime. There is an energy line (the **silver cord**) linking the consciousness to the body. This cord will bring you back. This is astral traveling. It is the **astral mind** that goes out.

13. If you have **awareness**, the **close proximity karma won't happen**. You **will know how to die**. Brother Teoh knew that because if he can do it when he was young (before even knowing the dharma), after cultivating the dharma, it would be a lot easier for him to do it.

14. Six years ago, Brother Teoh experienced a **heart attack**. Three months before, a **message came from his nature** advising him to go for a **medical checkup concerning his heart and arteries condition**. He then said, if there are signs then he will self-admit himself to the hospital. The signs came 3 months later. He felt something not right and knew he had to see the doctor. After being checked, true enough *he actually had a heart attack, an Angina*. But because he was aware, he **did not feel any pain but just an eerie feeling**. The ECG shows an **abnormal elevation**. After that they jab him and he was admitted for 5 days. After this incident, his consciousness experiences some changes. But with the dhamma, Brother Teoh knew what was happening and how he can best overcome it. Although mentally he was strong, but physically he was pretty weak during and after the surgery because of the lack of food due to his fasting since the night before until the next day about 5pm. After an energy drink of milo, his consciousness was more stable. Or else he would have gone into the meditative state and sleep to rest. He was still **fully aware** then. He was aware how his body was fully exhausted and went through a **peculiar phase**, and he knew that anytime the form and mind could separate because it lack physical energy at that time.

15. A full consciousness has 17 thought moments. In between there are 7 determining thought moments that decide the type of karma. For Death consciousness it is shorter, there are only 5 janas instead of the usual 7. Immediately after the **death consciousness** (cuti citta), *Avijja (ignorance) conditions rebirth consciousness*. Rebirth consciousness is just a simple consciousness, born of ignorance. Immediately this consciousness inherits its karmic past from his karmic nature. This consciousness starts to develop inside the fetus. It receives the food and nutrient from mother through the umbilical cord and grows. When it is born, it will be subject **to conditioning** by those *who care for them*. The brain starts to develop. Then as they go to school, their education curriculum together with the social media, and their belief system and family culture, etc. **conditioned and molded** them accordingly. But Karma has a great influence on all these, **consciousness** then develops into **a bundle of memory with its views and opinions, conditioning, belief system, accumulation of fear, insecurities, and scars of memory, phobias etc.** – and **this is what** you are. This sophisticated consciousness is trapped in the physical form till death. Heartbeat/pulse of life is needed to arise consciousness. If no life force, you cannot function as a human being. The moment the heart pumps, it sends the **consciousness into the blood which goes around to nourish the entire body**. That's how you can be aware of any location within you; where there is blood, you can have the ability to be aware there.

16. This pulse of life/the life force, apart from sending blood to your body, can also be used to arise consciousness, for us to be conscious of things. It is like a power bank or energy source. When you know how to meditate, this **whole life force can be switched off at the heart base and channeled into our nature via the gateway to our nature**. Once it goes in, it **activates the internal movements via trust**. During that time, Brother Teoh's nature transformed and he progressed very fast. Most human beings do not know how to use this life force or pulse of life. Instead they use it to arise thoughts and emotions (like sorrow, lamentation, anger, envy, jealousy, fear etc.) leading to stress and high blood pressure. They **don't know how to calm themselves down** and are **not sensitive enough to feel all these emotions**. They **don't know how to develop the ability to be aware, stay calm and peaceful to experience the tranquility and stillness and quietness of mind**. When it pumps, instead they use it to arise thought and emotions. Hence a lot of this energy is being **wasted in the heedless thinking and emotions**. This life force energy is **not properly and wisely utilized**.

17. This life force energy **should be used for meditation, to develop our nature**. Most people just let it arise and then disappear because they **use it mostly for thinking to condition their emotions like fear, phobia etc**. This takes away a lot of your life force energy. When you think a lot, or **feel stressed, unhappy and anxious**, you are **very tired and completely drained**. However if you use it appropriately, you are most of the time in the **meditative state**; you **recover and recharge yourself very fast**. You **feel calm, peaceful and aware most of the time**. You are **always fresh and have clarity of mind**. This is what the **pure consciousness** is all about. When it is **not properly used because of delusion** then its consciousness becomes **complicated and deluded**, - this **remnant of consciousness** is the one that comes out upon death, i.e., separation of **consciousness** (the bundle of memories with its conditioning, etc.), from the **physical form**. This remnant of consciousness has to come out because the form cannot support it anymore.

18. When there is **no more life force, your heart beat stops**; Consciousness **cannot stay inside** because brain dead, and the **blood cannot nourish the vital organs**. Then when your heart fails to pump, all organs will fail. There is no use for the consciousness to stay inside as it cannot give life or allow the body to function as a human being again. When **vital organs within the physical body is/are destroyed**, consciousness has to leave too. The moment any of the **remaining 2 vital conditions that supports life is no longer there**, the trapped consciousness has to leave the body.

19. For **non-cultivator**, you **cannot decide** what happens before you die. In the Tibetan tradition they teaches you POWA, a technique on how to die, and a chance to get enlightened in that dying state. For Brother Teoh, this type of practice is of not much use because most importantly is to prepare yourself via **meditation** long before death actually take place. Cultivate **strong mindfulness** to develop the **ability to understand clearly what death is?** When you **have mindfulness and awareness, you will know how to die**. This death proximity karmic consciousness won't come and disturb you. This is because the **awareness nature is beyond the mundane mind**. It will know this is not real. The **remnant of consciousness** will just come out. And **when it does, it can see and hear everything except that it doesn't have a physical body**. Everything that others say, this remnant consciousness can know and hear. This remnant consciousness can even call out to you but you can't hear it. Out of anger, they could even create eerie feeling in you and the surrounding. Brother Teoh shared that if the decease holds onto any of their religious belief, upon death, the visions they see will manifest according to their conditioning and fear. Although rebirth consciousness is already gone, but because the remnant of consciousness (which is still **deluded**), are still attached to this world, so they will **stay**

**around** just like *those non-humans or hungry ghosts, spirits, etc.* (in the other realm of existence) for *such time till it disperse* (when there is no more conscious energy to support its existence).

21. When there is **self-delusion**, you will think **you have lose your loved one** and this is **attachment**. The remnant of consciousness is **not you nor your loved one**. When there is no longer any attachment, this remnant of consciousness will then disperse, and be gone completely. This remnant of consciousness is in another realm which can only communicate with the other remnant of consciousness in the same realm. But if you are mindful, you can feel them, when they are around.

22. Death is **separation of consciousness from the form**, no reality because the form and mind is dependent originating, condition arising hence impermanent and not you, it goes the way of nature. When you understand this, you mind can be freed.

23. From the Buddhist perspective, the best way **to repay** your loved ones (especially your parents) is to thank them, take care of them via loving them, *express your gratitude towards them, honor them* and teach **them the dhamma** while **they are still alive**. But more often than not, most people prepare for their death just outwardly as a formality, to feel good so that they will have no remorse.

24. Those 3 questions are usually asked by non-Buddhist. As a Buddhist you will **understand in actual fact, no one dies**. It is just nature's law manifesting because **death is a reality** and **no one can escape death**, so why worry? But there is such a thing as **filial piety** and to be able to *express our love and gratitude towards our loved ones while they are still alive is important*. **After they pass away, you just do what you have to do**, for the Buddha said, 'no amount of sorrow and lamentation can bring back the dead', so no need to cry. As for the ritual, no need to spend too much money on the coffin and ceremony thinking it can give you more merits. But if there is a necessity to do the wake properly to inform others on their passing, then just go through it following the Buddhist way which does not cost much. As for the ashes, they are just elements because their consciousness already left. You can either keep them in an urn or dispose it off into the lake or river or sea. Finally the understanding is 'Hey no you and hey no me'. If the decease is a cultivator then you may collect its relics and keep them.

25. If you want to develop filial piety, you can put the ash inside the urn and place it either at home or at a location with proper Buddhist chanting. Make offering in their name is also a good practice. For Buddhist, just understand what death is. Understand there is this law of karma which recognizes relationship, so we need to do our duty towards our loved ones. Duty means our responsibility to care for them, provide for them and do what is proper, no selfishness, no evil root nor negativity. When it comes to death, there is no reality. Acceptance of what is, if you need to talk to them, do so. This remnant of consciousness is no longer the real entity. Even when it is trapped inside, it is also not them for it is dependent originating. Finally this remnant of consciousness will disperse. But you can always talk to your loved one, telling them that they have passed over to another realm. It is not them anymore, and if they want to roam about with it, they can. But ultimately it is not real and they can't do much without the physical form. They can listen to dharma and rejoice though.

26. The best is to have awareness and mindfulness, then you will know how to die and you can die well as this consciousness can be used for wondrous things. Just without the physical body. Brother Teoh further said he can't tell if it can go to another body or not unless one has that ability because it involves the karmic law which is very complex.

27. In Tirokudda Sutta, it explains **further regarding loved ones after they die**. **We must think of them and express our gratitude towards them**. Then *their remnant of consciousness will be at peace because they will be happy knowing what you have done*. But if you say negative things, they can be angry with you.

28. For near death experience (NDE), the **astral mind** or consciousness can still come back to the body because the silver cord is still connected and the full consciousness did not leaves the body.

29. When a loved one dies, you can still send metta to them and make them peaceful. Ask them to listen to dharma, and develop the joy. Brother Teoh shared that he may use his remnant of consciousness (connected to his nature) to explore the universe if there is condition for his nature to do so. Even though it is not him anymore, but it is the tool for his nature to use before it finally disperse. Brother Teoh also shared that, one of his mission in this life is, when his

consciousness comes out, it will use it to explore the universe and find out things that scientists still cannot understand. It will go to the star, the sun and explore the universe. This consciousness with the nature's awareness, can be used for such studies. But whether it can after that come back through another body, he can't tell.

30. If there is any unfinished business, this remnant of consciousness of unenlightened being can still linger around for quite a long time without dispersing. That's why you can sense eerie feeling if they are angry and around. You can radiate metta towards them, express gratitude instead of being fearful. This makes them feel good and at peace. Recall to mind all the good things they have done. These are all stated in the Tirokudda Sutta which will be shared in the next sharing.

31. **While loved one is alive, be loving towards them. When they are gone, no need to do complicated or expensive rituals.** Also we ***need to respect our other family members' wish***. You do your part, share merits, transfer merits etc. Some people use the Pak Kim received from well-wishers for donation to charitable organizations and do something wholesome with the money instead of spending more on the funeral rituals. To do something wholesome in the name of the deceased is a lot better. If you put the urn in a special place it is good too. If the consciousness is still around, let them listen to the music and chanting which are more conducive for them instead of roam about without understanding. **Buddhist understanding simplifies everything.** Simplest way is to cremate and put ashes in the urn or disperse it into the river. Some cultivators will keep the relics which can give rise to good vibration/energy.

(Above draft was prepared by Sister Phey Yuen )