

Brother Teoh's Thursday class Talk (17th January 2019) outline Short Notes

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190117.mp3>

Whiteboard : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190117.jpg>

1. **Initial wisdom (yonisomanasikara)** must be developed to **cope** with **sense experience** and to **develop meditation**. The **avijja sutta** highlighted **various steps** for **cultivators to check** their **cultivation**. **Daily mindfulness** and **sati sampajana** are vital steps. Yonisomanasikara comes from stability of daily mindfulness. With sati, thought will not be there because your mind can only do one thing at a time, either it is aware or lost in thought. When you are lost in thought will negative emotions, you cannot have the clarity to understand what is going on within the moment. Thus no wisdom. However, if you are aware and silent, there is clarity, this nature can meditate, understand and develop the wisdom through seeing things as they are.
2. When you have **stability of daily mindfulness**, you can **reflect** and **contemplate** into the dhamma. The second turning wisdom is through **inquiry** into the essential dhamma (especially the 4 noble truths. When you are silent and aware, your mind is in a **creative state** and in this creative state, it can understand. When you have stability of mindfulness, you do not need external environment to be peaceful. You just need a relatively quiet place where you are not disturbed, then you can start your contemplation. This contemplation gives rise to the second turning of wisdom which then gives rise to the initial wisdom.
3. Why do our mind stir? It is due to our **wrong views** that condition our likes and dislikes, pleasant and unpleasant reactions to sense experience. This creates mental hindrances of sensual desires and ill will. The real wisdom comes from our understanding. Why should we react? Thing is just as it is, the world is the world. These are nature's realities. You have to **understand** this **deeply**. When you understand you can laugh it off and smile because you **understand** and you are always at **peace**. Things happen in life because conditions are there to cause things to arise in such manner. You can act with **wisdom** following **Noble 8-Fold Path**. With **wise acceptance** you are **calmer** within. You **seldom react** or **stir** your mind anymore.
4. After you have straightened your views, there is less avijja leading to less sankhara (thinking) and less stirring of the mind. Your mind is peaceful, has more clarity and calmer. Daily mindfulness becomes easier to cultivate.
5. Having dhamma friends is vital for us to have the condition to listen to the true dhamma. As you listen to the true dhamma you can contemplate and reflect on them to arise the 2nd turning wisdom needed to straighten your view. You can also investigate the dhamma and when it stands up to investigation, it **strengthens** your **faith** in the **triple gem**. You will then go all out to cultivate **daily mindfulness** leading to **sense restraints**. Wrong thoughts, wrong actions and wrong speech thus cannot arise. Then only you can cultivate the satipatthana practices (4 foundations of mindfulness).
6. Most of us lack the **daily mindfulness** and **initial wisdom** needed to be **heedful in life**. The moment you are heedful, you are destined for enlightenment (dhammapada verse 21).
7. Brother Teoh **encouraged** kalyanamittas **to read** the **latest** transcript books titled '**The 5 aggregates of Form and Mind**' and '**Understanding the Heart and the Mind**' to be introduced soon. These latest transcript books are been prepared with improved flow and language to enhance its readability.

8. You need to understand the **5 aggregates of form and mind** (the 2 aspects) to understand the Buddha's teachings.
9. Mind is consciousness, the formless movement and **unlike physical form** it is **less tangible**. So **without a stable mindfulness** you **cannot see mind**. Brother Teoh has shared before - **how to see mind**, the **unreality** of mind and how to see beyond mind. If you have the **stable daily mindfulness** you **can see** the **aggregates** of mind (**feelings, perception, mental states/mental activities** and **consciousness**) **very clearly**. They **arise and pass away very fast** because they are **dependent originating aggregates** hence they are **impermanent** leading to **suffering** if we **attach** to them **deludedly**. This will enable us to see the **unreality of mind**. When one is able to **see beyond** form and mind, one has the **direct seeing**. One can then see truth within nature without being distracted by your mental conditioning and memories.
10. Brother Joseph enquire about his understanding of anatta as non-self and the impersonal process. We should not take our physical body personally as a self. Brother Teoh explained that anatta has deep meaning, non-self is just one small aspect of anatta. According to the Buddha,
- All sankhara are impermanent (sabbe sankhara aniccam),
 - All sankhara are suffering (sabbe sankhara dukkham) and
 - All dhamma are anatta (sabbe dhamma anatta).
- (In the last stanza, 'dhamma' is used instead of 'sankhara' because it is referring to **both** the conditioned and unconditioned. Sankhara are mental states and activities of mind within the **conditioned world** thus it only refers to **conditioned dhamma**.)
- Rupam aniccam, rupam anatta.
11. How can **external form** like the table or white board, etc. be non-self? Therefore the **real meaning** of anatta is: It is not a **permanent unchanging entity** that you can cling onto as the 'I' and the 'Me'. The 5 aggregates of Form and Mind (both aspects) are dependent originating, impermanent hence also anatta.
12. All of sankhara (your content of consciousness including perception and feeling) are impermanent. They arise and pass away very fast. Mind made are they. The mundane mind is the heedless thinking mind, the conditioned arising mind and the dependent originating mind. Thoughts are response to memories. When the pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling ceases, did you die? Feeling comes and goes, but you did not die. Therefore this feeling is NOT you, hence **anatta**.
13. Anatta means this **human being** (**1st aspect** of the 5 aggregates of Form and Mind) with the **consciousness** trapped inside is **NOT you**. Both the physical form and mind consciousness (the 4 aggregates of mind) are dependent originating, impermanent therefore it is not you. In short it is due to your **self-delusion** which causes you to cling to the **5 aggregates** of form and mind thinking it is you that is the cause of suffering. If the 5 aggregates are not you, then who are you? What are you?
14. These 5 aggregates of form and mind is a karmically conditioned vehicle and tool for you to come to this condition world to live life and experience the karmic fruition/consequences. You should make use of this form and mind **wisely**, and **not be deluded by it** thinking it is you. The form and mind is a tool and vehicle for you to come to this world to experience life. Thus live it well. Without the egoic mind borne of delusion, you would not cling or attach to the form and mind.

15. Reflect on the chanting of the Sangha as taught by the Buddha – rupam aniccam (form is impermanent), rupam anatta (form is not a permanent unchanging entity) we can develop great wisdom. Form (both the bodily form and external forms) are impermanent. They arise through conditions. When conditions cease to be, form ceases to be (to read the recently reprinted 5 aggregates transcript book to develop the clear understanding). The external form is unreal, what more when what you see is merely an image (pointing to the forehead) thus is even more unreal. Anatta means no a permanent unchanging entity, hence no reality. You cannot hold or cling onto it. When you die, all of your loved ones and ‘possession’ in the mundane world will separate from you. Your possession and wealth only ends up as inheritance. Hence the saying ‘empty you come (at birth), empty you go (at death). There is no point grieving over emptiness in between’.
16. Anatta - empty nature of existence. Rupam anatta (form is not a permanent unchanging entity). Form and mind (as a compounded entity) is a conditioned arising entity. Anatta has the same meaning as sunyata (emptiness). Emptiness is not empty of everything. It means empty nature of existence. We **cannot deny** we were born as we have gone through this phase of life. But is there any **reality**? We can only **recall what happened** through **memories**. What we experienced is within the moment, split second it is dead and gone. The only reality in life is the present moment, the here and the now. Just like what is explained in Eckhart Tolle’s book - ‘Power of Now’ regarding the importance of the **present moment**. Just like Buddha’s teaching on awareness. Thus the question we should ask is, moment to moment, life passes by, what am I doing? The problem with human beings is that they are **too busy** thinking, planning and worrying about life so much so that they do not live as they do not have present moment awareness nor mindfulness to live and experience the moment. Split second the thoughts via the thinking mind come and take over making you loss in thought.
17. On the other hand, with awareness and mindfulness, you will come to understand that life has no reality. Even your own body you do not own, what more trying to own others. You say “my son, my wealth, my properties, etc. this only the fool’s lament for that very body also does not belong to him, thus whence son and whence wealth?”
18. The 5 aggregates of form and mind is NOT you but it is related to you via your karmic nature. Thus Buddha asked us to do the **5 daily contemplations**: This body of ours is of the nature to age, get sickness and die for it has not gone beyond old age, sickness and death. All that you think **you own** and **cling on to dearly**, they will one day **separate** from you or **when your breath stops**, you **separate from them**. We are all born of our karma, heir to our karma, conditioned and supported by our karma and we are what we are every moment every instant due to our karma.
19. The 5 aggregates of form and mind is NOT a permanent unchanging entity and they are dependent originating, go the way of nature. Hence suffering will arise when you want things your way which is against nature’s way.
20. Via meditation you can ask yourself, who am I and what am I? What is this awareness which is aware of the form and mind? Is this awareness part of form and mind?
21. The analogy of the driver and the car is a good analogy to understand your form and mind. The driver is **synonymous** to the **mind** and the car to the **form** or **vehicle** that takes you around and they work together to function as a compounded entity but both are not you. You are the big boss who owns the car and the driver. The boss is synonymous to your nature which is connected to the Form and Mind. This nature is never born therefore it never dies because It is an eternal nature. Just like the ‘boss’ who owns the car and driver he (your nature) seldom shows himself. You have two natures namely your true nature and your Karmic nature. This true nature is

your awareness, your true mind. This karmic nature is the nature that records all your karmic activities and your good and bad merits. This merits is similar to your spiritual wealth/money that decides which model of the car and what type of driver you can have when you are reborn.

22. The true understanding comes about **through meditation** when you are able to see for yourself that this form and mind is NOT you. The few essential dhamma I use to teach you all are always the same, but I always approach it from different directions depending on conditions that arise so that you all can understand its deep meaning.
23. Everything is anatta. Including our natures which cannot come out and live life. That is why these natures are also anatta. But the **true nature** is capable of awakening, insight and the direct seeing. There is a gateway within your form and mind that links you to this true nature. The coming transcript book with the title 'Understanding the Heart and the Mind' talks about this gateway and the true mind.
24. There are 2 aspects to explain the 5 aggregates of form and mind:
 - a) **1st aspect as a human being**. As a human being we have a Physical form + a mind Consciousness trapped inside the body. Mind has 4 aggregates. To understand them inquire - what can your mind do? Your mind can Feel, Perceive, arise sankhara and consciousness. All that your mind can do, including all of your **scheming, planning, cunningness, emotions, various mind states**, etc. are part of sankhara.
 - b) **2nd aspect** - as a mental 5 aggregates of Form and Mind that arise at every moment of sense door consciousness.
25. In the **seeing**, there is **only the seeing consciousness**, there is **no one** to see because the content of consciousness has not gone in as yet. Thus **no delusion** or **wrong view**. This is the **pure awareness** or **vinanam** as mentioned in the Buddha's 12 links teaching of - "*avijja paccaya sankhara; sankhara paccaya vinanam; vinanam paccaya nama rupam*". This **nama rupam** is the **2nd aspect** of the **5 mental aggregates** of Form and Mind. It **arises** when the **content** of consciousness **enters** the **pure consciousness**. Perception then brings in the external form. This external form makes up the **5th or last aggregate**. Due to ignorant, you create mental thinking. Thinking is a mind process and your mind (brain) is an organ, so the moment you think, you made contact with the mind, then **mental consciousness** comes to be. This is the **pure consciousness** (vinanam) **without** the content. When you input the content, the vinanam becomes the nama rupam.
26. If we attach to this 5 aggregates of form and mind, we suffer. If we attach to this body – worrying about it getting old, fall sick and die, we suffer. We should use this form and mind with wisdom without being attached to them deludedly. That is how we free our mind. If we attach to feelings, we suffer. We should understand when unpleasant feelings arise, we have two choices, react and be miserable or wise acceptance and be at peace. With this understanding, your mind does not stir.
27. Meditation is not merely sitting, it involves training mind to be aware, to realize the **silent mind** (the **meditative mind**), to be with **the moment** in **silent awareness** while living in the midst of life (in all postures). **Not to use** the **thought** to 'meditate', to **focus** or **concentrate** but instead to develop **mindfulness** and **awareness** leading to **heedfulness**. The Buddha said, '*heedfulness is the path to the deathless, the heedless are as if dead*'.
28. Brother Teoh shared that it is through daily mindfulness that his nature understands and sees all these.

(Above draft is by Sister Angie, Phey Yuen)