

## Outline short notes for our Thursday class dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190502.mp3>

1. Bro Teoh related how **beautiful** their recent spiritual trip to Guiyang, China was. The Kalyanamittas who participated in the trip visited the way place of Sakyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Buddha. Sister Angie also mentioned that the trip has brought her more understanding about how the mind can affect the body.
2. Bro Teoh affirmed this by saying that when one's **faith is strong**, we **do not get tired** despite the **long hours of hiking and walking**. Surprisingly, those who went **could even sit and meditate** for about **45 minutes** after the **hectic climb/schedule** at the Golden Buddha temple nearby. Besides they were not sleepy while travelling on the bus for more than 2 hours. After that they also managed to listen attentively during the night dharma sharing with Bro Teoh until about 10.30pm that night. Some of them were also wide awake while sleeping that night because of the rather strong collective spiritual energy felt. According to Bro Teoh, if one has the faith, stillness and silence within, one can constantly harness and draw nature's pristine spiritual energy of the places they have visited. Coupled with saddha, this will spur cultivators on to cultivate.
3. With the arising of the five spiritual faculties and having the **consistent heedfulness**, the steadfast one will soon realize the born-free supreme enlightenment, Nibbana following Dhammapada verse 23. This cultivation springs forth from a **free mind** which is ever mindful and rather sensitive to **see clearly all the subtle** cravings within their **mind states**. Such a mind is **so sensitive** that it can see the **habitual tendencies** that constantly arise and cause suffering to the heedless via their own self-delusion while living life.
4. The mundane mind (which is mainly thoughts) cannot realize the truth. Hence, cultivators who use **memory** and **dharma knowledge** to **seek truth** will fail to realize truth because truth is beyond thoughts and time. One should instead cultivate with the **silent mind** to arise the **wisdom** via the **direct seeing** to free one's mind from self-delusion or sakayaditti. The **silent mind** which is **just awareness** without any thought is your **true mind**.
5. Bro Teoh further emphasized the **importance** of cultivating the **Buddha dharma** with **understanding** especially **understanding** what **constitute evil** and **wrong thoughts**. If you continue to have **wrong thoughts** through **heedless living** (lack of mindfulness) it will condition **your suffering** because such **wrong thoughts** are thoughts that have the **evil roots** of greed, hatred and delusion which will make you evil. As a **consequence of this**, it will **condition** your fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow and lamentation, envy, jealousy, remorse, phobias, insecurities, selfishness and other emotional negativities which are all **negative mind states** that can lead to severe suffering and affliction of mind.
6. **Thought** is like a **tool to help us live and experience life** to the **fullest** but instead we use it to harm ourselves and hit out at others via arising the **wrong and harmful evil thoughts** instead of right and wholesome thoughts. It is like the simile of using a knife to hurt ourselves and others instead of using it appropriately to cut fruits, vegetables and shape things.
7. We hold the key to our life's destiny. To be happy or unhappy is entirely our choice so choose wisely. Always choose to be happy and peaceful. But then why are most people still not peaceful and happy.
8. We should **constantly reflect** and **contemplate** the **1<sup>st</sup> Noble truth's 8 realities of life and existence**. It is only through wisdom that we **will not be deceived** by the **phenomenal** world. By grasping deludedly to the five aggregates of form and mind, we will suffer. The simile of holding onto a glass of hot water **thinking it is my problem** and **I have to solve it** is a very good example because in doing

that we will hurt ourselves through delusion. If we use wisdom to approach the issue or so-called problem then we will not hold on to it because it is tormenting and burning us. Then we are at peace and we will have clarity of mind to investigate on the best options to take. Hence, having the right view to understand nature's conditions is crucial for us to develop this wisdom. Learn to see things as they are and resolve all things amicably via following the Noble 8-Fold Path. Reflecting on the five daily contemplations as mentioned by the Buddha will keep us more connected to reality and not be deluded by wrong thoughts.

9. Avijja or ignorance will cause us to project the wrong thoughts (fear, worry and anxiety) to harm ourselves and those around us. By doing so, the cells in our body can mutate and cause diseases too. So, having good mind states can lead to mental well-being and good physical health. Fear, worry and anxiety cannot help you.
10. Bro Teoh reminded us to have right view leading to right thought. It is helpful to keep in mind the four right efforts: to **abandon** the unwholesome mind states, **prevent** the arising of unwholesome mind states, **arise** wholesome thoughts, **refine upon** and **perfect on** such wholesome thoughts. By following the advice of the Buddha to do good and avoid all evil will gradually change our mind states from unwholesome to wholesome.
11. **What constitute evil?** They are **not just words** but we have to **understand how craving can cause the evil roots** (greed, hatred, delusion) to be **so powerful** that **we suffer** as a consequence of it. Cultivation will enable us to see our subtle craving and how the past conditioning has gone into our memory making us react so habitually to life. If we can't see what is happening within our minds, we will never understand the world.
12. Clinging onto the wrong thoughts will condition us to suffer again and again. The 3rd way is to approach it via the **meditative way** following the pool of water analogy (as used by the Buddha). When we allow the negative mind state to settle on its own **without** further stirring the mind (the simile of allowing the dirt in the glass of water to subside), we begin to understand our own minds. By **observing silently** with **awareness**, we see how the mind state (which is **dependent-originating**) arises and ceases. This silent observation leads to wisdom.
13. To further strengthen this wisdom, retrospectively trace the origination factor. The **deluded mind** stirs upon **contact** through the six sense bases **thus arising** the defilements. Through mindful observation, reflection and contemplation, wisdom will arise and we can then retrospectively reverse it via straightening our views.
14. In short, it is due to **self-delusion** that conditions us **to cling** onto the **five aggregates** thinking this is me, this is I and all these are mine. Hence, straightening our views to see things as they are is of utmost importance.
15. With **right view**, we can **accept things, people** and **situations** for what they are. Then there is **peace within**, we can then have the **mental clarity** to act **accordingly with understanding**. This right view can bring about right thought. Suttamaya Panna will lead to Cintamaya Panna and eventually Bhavanamaya Panna (3 types of wisdom borne of listening, wise reflection and realization through cultivation).
16. The **real meditation begins** when we **can stabilize** the **understanding** through **constant contemplation** and having the **meditative awareness** to cultivate the **daily mindfulness** while in the midst of life. It is **not about sitting** and **having good mental states**. **Wisdom keeps on arising** as one

**continues to insight into phenomena.** The **five mental** hindrances **will cease** when the 5 **opposite spiritual** faculties are established.

17. Sister Angie asked Bro Jeff about how to free ourselves from karma due to past lives. Bro Jeff said Bro Teoh had answered them in many ways tonight and must have done so in the past too. Bro Jeff said for whatever karma that is happening now, we have to **be aware** by **acknowledging** it. There is no way we can change the past so we **are experiencing** the effect of the past in the present. By **acknowledging** it and **accepting** the present moment, we can **observe** whatever that is arising **with a clear** mind. When the dissolution happens, wisdom will arise.
18. If such a situation arises again, we will know what to do. So, it is a **daily life practice** and not just doing sitting meditation. So it is about living and learning with mindfulness through our daily life experiences. Then Life itself is the meditation. We will appreciate it when **annoying people** or **annoying circumstances** appear in our lives. We take care of our own karma and leave the rest to take care of theirs. We do not have to perpetuate our own karma by reacting. We watch karma unfolding naturally without further reaction.
19. Bro Teoh further explained how people can **root out** all these **karmic repercussions** by breaking their **karmic obstructions** first then resolving all these karmic issues amicably. **Asking** for **forgiveness**, seeking **repentance** from the **Triple Gems** and **others**, vow **not** to repeat such karmic negativity via **avoiding all evil**, cultivating **wholesomeness** and **purifying the mind** then **invoke the power of merits** to arise the **causes and conditions** for the **turn around** to **resolve** all these karmic issues amicably are ways that can help us **root it out**.

(Above draft short notes are prepared by Puan Chee)