

Brother Teoh's Thursday class dated 23rd May 2019 outline Short Notes

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190523.mp3>

Whiteboard : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190523.jpg>

Youtube Video : Understanding Life - It's Purpose & Meaning <https://youtu.be/1fWr2FTT7Po>

Avijja Sutta <https://youtu.be/IRATribuROs>

A. 1st session - Meditation

1. When you understand the **Buddha's teaching**, you will have **strong faith** in him. This **spiritual faculty** of **Saddha** will arise the **viriya** (spiritual zeal) to drive you to **cultivate sati**. When the resulting **Sati** is stabilized it cumulates into **Samadhi** (a collected and unwavering free mind). This, will enable you **to see things as they are** leading to **wisdom**. These **5 spiritual faculties** can help you **overcome** the **5 mental hindrances** (of sensual desire, ill will, restlessness, sloth/torpor and doubt) to enable you to meditate. **Without** the **mental hindrances** the mind will settle down into the meditative state of inner peace and inner awareness easily.
2. With the **5 spiritual faculties established**, you can easily **relax** and **maintain silent inner awareness** to develop the **meditation**. Sati will be established leading to Samadhi right away. There is awareness of your heartbeat, mental activities as well as the contact of body and mind. You can see **dependent origination** clearly. Due to **ignorance**, sankhara (mental thinking) arises thereby **creating contact** with the **brain** to **trigger off** the **mental consciousness** with its **content** arise from memories, to **condition** your like/dislikes and emotional negativity.
3. For those without the 5 spiritual faculties to establish mindfulness, you need to **decondition** the **heedless thinking** by using the **mind-sweeping method** combine with metta. Then stabilize the sati with anapanasati.

B. 2nd session – Discussion topic: Understanding Life, Its purpose and meaning

4. If you **don't understand life** you **cannot live life** and you **cannot** discuss its **purpose** and **meaning**. So understanding life is very important.
5. All of us need **to confront** the **challenges of life** especially the 1st Noble truth's **8 realities** of confronting old age, sickness, death and separation from loved ones etc. with wisdom. We also need to **have self-knowledge** to know who are you and what are you? If you **don't even know who are you** and **what are you** then **who is living** your life? If you are deluded and heedless **without awareness** then the **thoughts** are living your life most of the time. It is important for us to **understand life** to live life well.

6. As Buddhists we are **indeed very blessed** to have Shakyamuni Buddha's **teachings to explain** to us the **deep meaning of life**. The **essence** of his teaching is the **4 noble truths** and this 4 noble truths, summary to us **all of life (both the mundane and supra mundane)**. It also reveal to us the **secret of life**.
7. The **1st noble truth** explains to us the **prevalence** of dukkha or suffering and it **highlight** to us the **8 realities** of life and existence. All of your suffering, sorrow and misery come from **confronting** these **8 realities without** the **requisite** wisdom. The 8 realities are: 1) Birth; 2) Old age; 3) Sickness; 4) Death; 5) Separation from loved ones or our prized possession, 6) When you're with people whom you don't like; 7) When things don't go your way, when your expectation in life are not met and when you cannot get what you want; and lastly 8) the **5 grasping aggregates** (conditioned by one's **self-delusion**) are **dukkha**. When you **meditate** with the **silent mind**, you will **understand** that this 5 aggregates of form and mind is **dependent originating** and **impermanent** hence it is **not you**. This body and mind is just a **karmically conditioned 'vehicle and tool'** for us **to come** to this **existential world to live and experience life**. With this understanding **you can live life with good understanding**.
8. When you **grasp and attach** to your **physical body** you suffer because **you will worry** about it **getting old, sick and one day die**. If you cling to **feeling**, whether pleasant or unpleasant feelings, you will also suffer because **feeling is dependent originating** hence it is **impermanent** and **not a permanent unchanging entity** which you can cling onto and grasp onto as the 'I' and the 'Me'. The same goes with all your **perception, sankhara** (activities of mind) and **consciousness**. Reason why the Buddha said, 'the **5 grasping aggregates** are suffering'.
9. The **2nd noble truth** explains the **cause of arising of suffering**. It is **self-delusion** that conditions **craving** that cause you **to grasp and cling**. **Investigate further**: If I grasp, cling and attach to **form and feeling**, all that I **perceive** and my **mind states, views and opinions, do I suffer?** Without **dharma wisdom**, you definitely suffer.
10. The **3rd noble truth** explains that **suffering need not be** if you have with **good understanding** of Buddha's teaching. **Enlightenment** in the **here and now is possible**. You know how to live life and are free from the 1st noble truth's 8 realities. You cannot be **deceived** by the **phenomenal world** and the **5 aggregates of form and mind** anymore. Instead you can **live life** to the **fullest**, with **joy, understanding** and **love** as an enlightened being.
11. The **4th noble truth** explains that if you cultivate this noble eightfold path, it will lead to the **end of all suffering** i.e. enlightenment in the here and now.
12. **Utu Niyama** (nature's physical order), **Bija Niyama** (nature's biological order), **Kamma Niyama** (law of Kamma/Moral causation), **Citta Niyama** and **Dhamma Niyama** are the **5 nature's universal orders** that governs all of life and existence. The **first 2** are **scientific laws** of nature and the last **3** are **spiritual laws of nature**. **Understanding these laws** constituent **right views** leading to **wisdom**. This will **enable us to understand life**.
13. Life is our greatest teacher. Nature has great compassion. We **learn from life** through **observing nature**. The nature's law of karma says, you **reap** what you **sow** and if you **plant the seed of**

wholesomeness, you will **reap the fruit of wholesomeness**. Master Hsuen Hua also said, whatever causes you plant will give rise to its fruition when there are conditions for their arising. He thus warned, 'please do not plant the wrong seed and reap the wrong fruit'. So to have the **good life** we have to **take care of karma** via following the **advice** of the Buddha.

14. From the **spiritual point** of view, your sole **purpose** in life is to develop **such understanding** via following the advice of the Buddha **to avoid all evil, do good** and **purify your mind**, to live the **good life** with **wisdom** and to always plant **wholesome** conditions.
15. You must have **Dutiful conduct** - do **your duty** in accordance with **these laws** of nature especially the law of karma. Be responsible in life. As spouse, as children, as siblings, as parents, as employee/employer, **do your duties well**. Even towards the environment. If you **neglect** your duties, in future you **will reap what you sow**. **Right duty is right dhamma**. You must also have **Right** conduct, **good** conduct and **wise** conduct after following the advice of the Buddha to cultivate wholesomeness to build up your karmic nature, so that when you choose to come or have come to, you will have the **good Karmic support**. Develop wisdom, you won't suffer, life becomes meaningful and beautiful. Live the **noble life of an enlightened** being who is **free of fear and suffering**. You are always peaceful, happy and tranquil. **Heart Sutra** – 'true emptiness is wonderful existence.
16. In the year 1971, Brother Teoh (17 years old) reflected on these questions, "Who Am I?" in this vast universe and why am I here? What is the purpose of life? He received the answer from deep within his nature – 'that he cannot understand all these unless he meditated'. This probe was due to his **past vows** and **cultivation**.
17. The **Meaning** and **purpose of life** can be **established after** you **understand life**. You must also understand who are you? What the 5 aggregates of form and mind is? Is it really you? If not, then who are you? It is important to understand who you are? In order to know who is living your life. Usually it is your thought that is living your life. The thought is egoic, deluded and full of craving. This **deluded thought** cannot live life. You need to contemplate and develop understanding of your **true mind**, to be **aware**, to **see clearly** who you are? Investigate into what the Buddha says. That the 5 aggregates is **impermanent** and if you cling onto it, you suffer. As it is impermanent, you cannot cling on to it, to say this is 'me' and all these are 'mine'. As you break free from **self-delusion**, your attachment to form and mind **loses its grip** and is **relinquished**. You understand the body and mind is **NOT you** but is **related to you karma wise**. To use the form and mind and **yet not** be deceived by it is wisdom. To realize the **unconditioned dharma** to develop the wisdom to live life is very important.
18. **Conditioned dharma has its own reality**. It **recognizes relationship**, right duty, wholesomeness and unwholesomeness and the 4 noble truths etc. But in **true emptiness** (the unconditioned), there is **no old age, sickness, death, no 4 noble truths, no suffering, no attainment, etc**. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. The Conditioned and Unconditioned dharma exist side by side. You need to understand both of them to live the good life.
19. To be able to apply Buddha's teaching is most important. Develop the **dharma understanding** and **cultivate** to **transform** both your **karmic** and **spiritual** natures. To become a **beautiful living being**

(personality and character wise) and be a **blessing** to all. Be determined to cultivate it, take vow, plant the Bodhi seed, nurtures it beautifully so that this Bodhi mind will continue to arise life after life to support your cultivation.

20. **Karmic nature** surely brings you to the world i.e. karma decides. Regarding the **spiritual nature** you have to **connect** to your **true nature first before you can inherit from it**. Thus it is **important** to **have the vows** and **aspirations** to enable you to **connect** with your true nature and the Bodhi mind to propel you forward to receive the teaching so that you are always on the right track. Faith in the dharma is vital.
21. When Brother Teoh's nature comes to this world, he just accords and flows with understanding, to allow conditions to arise by itself. Brother Teoh shared that by attending his dharma classes, the merits and parami accrued can be very immense and powerful. It is **rare indeed** to have the condition to listen to the **true dharma** thus **cherish** and **treasure it**. In that sense you all are **very blessed** to be part of the **kalyanamitta family**. You all **must have your past cultivations** and **affinity**.
22. After straightening your views with initial wisdom, you are less reactive, more aware and mindful. There is more space between thoughts. You are calm, peaceful and your mind seldom stirs. This is **sati sampajanna**. Once you hit this, you are home. With this **sati sampajanna** cultivated only you can have **sense restraint** to **enable you** to cultivate the **4 right efforts, keep precepts** and arise the **3 way of right conducts**. By then you are at least a Sotapanna or a skadagami. You can then cultivate the **4 foundation of mindfulness**. Then the **7 factors of enlightenment** keeps on arising, you are on the right path - enlightenment in the here and the now (Nibanna) can happen. All these 10 cultivation steps as stated in the Avijja sutta is not difficult. The path and fruition keeps on arising. When connected to your true nature, you can breeze through the cultivation very fast, continuing from your past life cultivation after that.

(Above outline short notes draft is by Sister Angie Chong)