

Outline Short Notes for Brother Teoh's 13th June 2019 Thursday Talk

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190613.mp3>

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1. Meditation is to be **done** with **understanding**. It involves **training** the **mind** to be **aware, cumulating** into moment to moment awareness (which is **continuous**) within life itself. This is the **new way** of living life, whereby **awareness is continuous** and **one is always heedful** (ever mindful and **constantly** meditative).
2. Brother Teoh shared the 'tap dripping analogy' used by **Ajahn Jagaro** to **explain what sati or mindfulness is**. He said, cultivating Mindfulness is like turning on the tap. Initially it **hardly drips** meaning **one is hardly** mindful throughout the day. Then as one **trains** the mind with **understanding**, this **mindfulness starts** to arise. It starts to **drip bit by bit** meaning **every drip** is **one moment** of **awareness** and initially the drips are **not continuous** yet. You **eventually train** yourself until the **drips** become a **continuous flow**. It is like **awareness is now continuous**, not just one moment at a time. In the beginning, when your mind is **not trained**, within split second, the **mindfulness is gone** because of the **mental hindrances**. So it is **not easy** to be **aware all the time** because of your **heedless thinking** borne of your **mental hindrances** and **habitual tendencies**. The main reason is, you lack the opposite **5 spiritual faculties**. Without these 5 spiritual faculties the **5 mental hindrances** takes over and they will **hinder** your mind from **entering** the **meditative state of inner peace, calmness** and **awareness**.
3. Thus for you to be **constantly meditative**, you must develop the **5 spiritual faculties** until they are **very stable**. Then **cultivate following** the **10 steps as stated** in the **Avijja sutta**: i.e. i) associating with dharma friends; ii) listening to true dharma; iii) having **faith** in the triple gem by putting the essential dharma to test. This faith drives you to cultivate further. With Saddha and Viriya, you can **understand** the **essential dharma easily** which is the beginning of initial wisdom (Yoniso manasikara). Then **contemplate, inquire** and **reflect** on them to **straighten your views** to arise the **1st and 2nd turning wisdom** leading to this **initial wisdom** which is the **4th (iv) step**. You **are not deluded** anymore because you are able to see things as they are; your mind will **not stirred** like before upon sense experience. Initial wisdom leads to v) **Sati sampajanna**. Then the rest of the steps will more or less automatically unfolds - that is vi) sense restraint; vii) the 3 ways of good or right conduct; viii) 4 foundations of mindfulness; ix) 7 enlightenment factors leading to x) enlightenment in the here and now.
4. When you cultivate correctly following this **enlightenment sequence** of the **Avijja Sutta**, ignorance will be **rooted out** and you will be **transformed** from a **heedless** being to a **heedful** awaken one.
5. Initial wisdom leads to Sati sampajanna. Awareness **becomes a continuous** flow because **mind has entered sati**. You then have a **very stable mind** which is **heedful throughout** the day. Thus it is important to train mind until the spiritual faculties are strong. Initial wisdom is vital for daily mindfulness to become continuous. Mindfulness well developed give rise to piti (spiritual calmness and joy) and sukha (blissfulness). Mindfulness becomes **more refine** and Meditation object becomes very **subtle** then one experiences **passaddhi** (tranquility and stillness of mind). This is your **silent mind**, your **true mind** which is also your **meditative mind**. This is **true meditation**. As mind enters sati, there is transformation. Even when you are **out of formal meditation**, you can detect and be aware of your heartbeat, subtle breathing etc. Every movement is magnified. All seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, tactile and your thought processes are in sati. You are **heedful** in the mist of life.

6. When you are able to connect to your true mind, you will **inherit** from your **spiritual nature**. All understanding will start to unfold. Dharma is clear. You can easily understand the Mahayana sutras as truth because the true mind has awakened to truth.
7. You can use this **mindfulness** (the **silent mind**) to see your **evil roots**, to **straighten your views** and to **awaken**. Thus **wisdom** is vital. But **most cultivators** are **too impatient** and they **tend** to be **too eager** to relate to their sense experience the **theoretical dharma knowledge** that they have gathered leading towards **complacency**. **Contemplate** the dharma until they are very, **very clear** before **relating** to the **dharma** to **stabilize** your understanding. You need to **silent your mind until the awakening (wisdom) or understanding arise first**. **Don't go and look** for the dharma. The dharma is to be **awaken to** via the **direct seeing** by the **silent mind**.
8. When one have a **glimpse** of the **nibbanic state**, it is **important to stabilize it** and allow the **cessation to continue** for **longer duration** until it is **very stable**. Brother Teoh shared further that when you come out of that cessation, you will know who you are and what you are, what that 'nature' is. When you are in it, the form and mind completely cease. **Awareness** and the **pure consciousness** also cease. This is the **unconditioned**. One cannot decide when the form and mind will arise again. As the 'form and mind' is connected to that cessation, it will know how it happened. But the moment it goes into cessation, you **cannot talk** about it. When you are in this phase, you **cannot decide** when to come out. The condition will arise by itself. When it comes out, awareness and mindfulness will know how it all started - how the consciousness first comes in again at the heart area and immediately split into 3; one at your brain area, one at the heart area and one at the Tan Tien area. The moment consciousness enters this three main areas, it will **activate these centers**. You become 'animated' into a **human being again**. You see clearly with awareness how your brain starts again, like a dynamo starting to generate electricity again. Same goes for the heart area - how the pulse of life start, how the Tan Tien activates the energy movements in your body. Your mind will be transformed. When you come out of it, you can see the sense data coming in, one by one like in slow motion. Your **understanding** will be very different from then on, on who you are, what you are and how you become a human being. All these are not described in the scripture so you cannot understand unless you have gone through it yourself. Reason why the dharma is paccatam.
9. The Buddha mentioned that Nibbana is not something you **can talked** about **using words** because it is the **unconditioned**. However, Brother Teoh has to use words to describe to you what actually happened. But you must not look for it. When you do experience it, all the memory and understanding will come back to you and you will understand all this beautifully. You might use your own words which is different, to describe it. But they all point to the same experience and transformation - cessation of form and mind is always the same for all. This is the **Oneness nature** and for those who have gone through it, they will know. Buddha said, 'if it is not because of the unconditioned, escape from the conditioned world will be impossible'. The conditioned world needs conditions to manifest. The conditioned world is **always subject to conditions**, which is **dependent originating** hence **impermanent**, leading to **suffering** and thus **not you, not a permanent unchanging entity** you can cling or grasp on to. You will see the **empty nature of existence**, the **unreality of life** and the **phenomenal world of consciousness** very **clearly**. You truly understand what this 'form and mind' is and how it arises. There is a true nature connected to it. After that you are able to **comprehend** the **teachings** of Buddha clearly. You can see the big picture with all the small pieces of puzzles falling into place; reason why you are **able to link all the teaching after that** and you will also **come to understand** that all the Buddha's teaching (essential dhamma) spins out from the **4 Noble Truths**. I.e. from right view it all comes about. You are able to link them all through experiential understanding, not through knowledge. Buddha said the dharma can only be understood by the wise, each for

themselves - 'Paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi'. Unless you have the wisdom, you cannot understand the dharma. Buddha can only show you the way, you have to walk the path yourself, awaken yourself. No amount of teaching can help you if you don't have the **faith, sincerity** and **perseverance** to diligently develop the understanding of it.

10. When Brother Teoh first read about the **4 Noble truths** in 1971 he was only 17 years old, but his **nature knew** what that was and from that **moment** onwards he **stop his search** for **truth**. Brother Teoh knew, 'This is it. This is the **secret of life** and **this teaching** is the **most important** in life'. This **4 noble truths** explain the **whole of life**, both its **mundane** and **supra mundane** aspects. His **nature** had developed this understanding before, thus past cultivation is vital. Brother Teoh continued to share and **caution** Kalyanamitta that **complacency can occur** when one experience a very good or special **meditative mind state** and **thinks** one **has attained** because this is **not wisdom**. It is just a **conditioned state of mind**. It is **important** to **continue developing** your **daily mindfulness** to **enable** you to **see** your **subtle cravings, greed** and the **dependent origination links** of paticca sammupada clearly. Then through **personal experience** you **will come to realize** how **beautiful the teaching is**. You will **understand why Buddha said** we are all **still deluded** regardless of **how educated** we are. **Self-delusion/Ignorance** means **not understanding** who you are, causing you to cling to your form and mind and get afflicted. The **3 evil roots of greed, hatred and delusion** are behind all that you do when you are deluded.
11. Deluded beings tend to **have a motive behind what they do**, and **to argue** with others **to defend** their motives. They are **not able** to act with a **pure thought** which is **free** of the **3 evil roots**. Instead they always act with the 'for me or not for me' selfish intentions. This is the reason why Master Hsuen Hua modified the 5 precepts to the **6 principles** in his teaching by adding in, **no selfishness** and **no self benefitting** principles as part of the 6 principles **needed to live the good life**. When you are **very mindful** you are **very sensitive** and you will have **sense restraint** because **you will be able to see clearly** the **slightest movement** of like and dislikes and your subtle **mental intentions**. You **cannot do something selfless** due to **attachment borne** of **self-delusion**. For example, sending your children to the best college also comes from the thought that conditioned you to belief, they are your children and that is why you are willing to send them to the best college.
12. Brother Teoh shared his own experience on this during his **early days of cultivation**. He noticed very clearly that almost all of his actions or decisions are based on some form of selfish motives behind. Thus he continued to straighten his views and do things in a different manner. **Love means love, joy means joy. There is no opposites**. He **was able to help** anyone **genuinely**, when there is **condition to help**. Brother Teoh said, 'this can be done'. If there is **no conditions**, even his own family members or relatives, he also will not help. He does not force his children to study the dharma when they are still young. He just let them be and let conditions set in - which will manifest due to their past karma.
13. With good conditions, you will get to hear the dharma. Everything in this universe are just causal phenomenal, a phenomenal world of consciousness, no reality, only memories. There is no such thing as 'My loved ones', 'my wealth' and 'my possessions' etc. They only relates to the **existential world**. But because our 'form and mind' is subject to karma which recognizes relationships, so you must **do your duty** in **accordance with this law of karma** and **not be deluded** by the 'form and mind', thinking they are **your loved ones** and **you are real**.
14. Sister Tammy shared her recent retreat experience where she experienced hearing an eerie crying sound in the middle of the night. There were rumors about unseen beings around that area. Her thoughts proliferated. She reflected on it and said, 'it is just fear' so don't worry.

15. Brother Teoh shared further, that **fear arise due to one's thought projection**. So stay with the fear with awareness and see what happen? Often it is from your **conditioned memory** which will remind you of your Chinese belief that in dark places there are ghosts. But when you have the understanding, you do not fear and the eerie crying sound may continue. At least you notice these thoughts movements. You know that this **non-human** has **no physical form** and thus cannot harm you. You **should trust your nature, virtue and dharma cultivation to protect** you. There must be condition for these non-humans to be here. It is usually the case that these non-humans just want merits. King Bimbisara's story is a good example where he could not sleep due to the spirits who actually wanted merits and after he shared merits the spirits became deva. These non-humans usually can sense one's aura and they need merits to go to a higher realm. We can just silent our mind, radiate metta and share merits with them, and they can receive. When we chant 'Ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhummaṭṭhā, Deva nāga mahiddhikā, Puññaṃ taṃ anumoditvā, Ciraṃ rakkhantu loka sāsanaṃ', the **deva will rejoice** and they will long protect you and the Buddha sasana. That is why you tend to notice that when **we travel, go on spiritual trips and meditation retreats**, everything somehow falls into place and it was as if we are always very lucky, very blessed and well protected. The weather too are always very kind to us. Buddha sasana will continue to exist as long as **genuine dharma cultivators** are still around.
16. Mental hindrances are the ones hindering you from entering the meditative state to meditate, from keeping your precepts, from having virtue and cause you to **entangle yourself** with problems in life. With **dharma understanding**, you will know how to live differently to have the good life where everything is a blessing instead.
17. As kalyanamittas, **we have our cultivation** so learn to **trust your virtue, merits and blessings**. Your **10 meritorious actions** performed **while attending** our **dharma classes and session** are very powerful and when you invoke the power of merits for causes and conditions for you to always avoid the foolish and heedless, meet up with the wise always, you will **progress beautifully**. Thus you don't have to worry about having the good life as your **nature will shine forth** and support you. Nothing protects you except your **virtues, wisdom and goodness**. There is no need to fear, as it is only the thought that fears. **Cultivate continuously, share and transfer merits** to all beings and dharma protectors, **rejoice** and be a **blessing to all**. That is why every dharma session before and after class, puja is done. You recall to mind the significance of all the **puja offerings**, you take refuge, renew your precepts, performing dana, sila and bhavana, chant salutations to Triple gem, listening to dharma, rejoicing, straightening your views, sharing and transferring merits, provide service to community. All these are the **10 meritorious actions**. As you do these wholesomeness in every session with a **heedful mind**, you are **transformed without you even knowing** it. When you attend one of this session with **faith, sincerity and attentiveness**, the **merits you received, is beyond what you can imagine**. Sometimes a person who has lived 100s of worldly lives doing worldly merits **cannot even accumulate** this much merits because the merits you get from one of this session is **way beyond theirs**. If you attend one of our **annual meditation retreat** (for example our **9 days annual meditation retreat** at Cameron Highlands, Sam Poh temple), the wholesomeness your nature received will be way beyond, and you will benefit tremendously, progress very fast along the dharma path.
18. Brother Teoh explained further on **sharing merits** with the **unseen beings/spirits** when you are travelling. You can share merits from the heart. **When you can feel or sense them**, silent your mind and **communicate or talk to** them. Explain to them that you know they have been occupying this place, long before you arrive, but in this **society of ours**, there is the tradition that if we pay for the room we have the right to stay for the night, so you are **most welcome to stay** and **help protect** this place. I come in peace and mean no harm. If I had caused you

any **misunderstanding** or anxiety, **please accept my sincere apology**. Then **wish them well-being** and **happiness** always. You are just there to stay for the night, not to create any unnecessary misunderstanding and that you hope they understand. As cultivator (dharma practitioner) you will share and transfer merits to them. Radiate love and metta to them. These non-humans are actually everywhere with different culture and religious belief. (Above outline short notes draft was prepared by Sister Angie Chong Phey Yuen)