

Brother Teoh's 4th July 2019 Thursday class outline short notes

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190704.mp3>

Whiteboard : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190704.jpg>

Youtube Video : [Roadmap to Understanding the Buddha's Teaching](https://youtu.be/T9N9MhaMX5M) <https://youtu.be/T9N9MhaMX5M>

A. Meditation instructions

1. Cultivators need to develop the **5 spiritual faculties** of Saddha, viriya, sati, samadhi and panna to enable them to understand the **spiritual** teaching. **Faith** in the **triple gem** through **understanding** how **special** and **unique** the Buddha is, is very important. He is not only enlightened, he is **fully enlightened**, perfect (**foremost**) in **wisdom** and **virtues**, thus he **understands life** completely. One is also **grateful** for his **teaching** because it can bring about **enlightenment** in the **here and the now**. One will then have the **spiritual zeal** (viriya) to **learn** and **cultivate** his teaching **to liberate** one's **mind** from the samsara. This viriya will drive you to cultivate **mindfulness (sati)** which in turn will help you **understand clearly** all the **essential dhamma**. **Without sati**, you **cannot meditate** nor **understand** the **profound teaching**, for Sati is life. **Without sati**, one is **heedless** and the **heedless are as if dead**. (Dhammapada **verse 21**: Heedfulness is the path to the deathless; Heedlessness is the path to the dead. The heedful do not die; the heedless are as if dead).

2. There are two parts to **heedfulness** i.e. **constantly meditative** and **ever mindful** as per **dhammapada verse 23**. (Dhammapada verse 23: The **constantly meditative**, the **ever mindful** and the **steadfast one** realizes the bond free Nibbana). First we **develop mindfulness** then **stabilize it** until it is **ever mindful**. One can stabilize one's mindfulness by anchoring it to a **meditation object** (e.g. anapanasati or sati sampajanna or **mindfulness of the 4 postures**, etc.) When you can be **ever mindful** in the **midst of life**, you can **start to cultivate the noble eightfold path**. You need to **stabilize this sati**, until the **mind enters passaddhi** (tranquility and stillness of mind). This is the **true mind**, the **silent** mind. Only such a mind can make you **ever mindful** in life.

3. When **passaddhi is stabilized** it leads to **Samadhi** (the **unwavering** and **collected** mind) in midst of life. When mind is in Samadhi, the **mind does not stir nor react to sense experience** as before. You are then **able to see things as they are**, thereby arising **wisdom** (panna) needed **to straighten** your views leading to more and more **right views**. All meditation starts with right view.

4. Most people **cannot** meditate because they **have not trained** their mind to develop the **5 spiritual faculties**. Without the **5 spiritual faculties** the opposite 5 **mental hindrances** (which **hinder them** from entering the meditative state of inner peace and inner awareness) will be there. Without the spiritual faculties, the mental hindrances take over and you **tend to think a lot** and **become heedless**. **Restlessness of mind** borne of **fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow** and **lamentations** are among them the **most powerful hindrance**. When you experience a sense experience, you tend to **react to** sense experience, giving rise to likes and dislikes, sensual desires and ill will, thus **mental hindrances** become so rampant until they become **habitual tendencies** leading to **latent tendencies (anusaya)**, **kilesa** and **asava** (strong defilements ever ready to erupt and cause you misery). These asava and kilesa run rampant in deluded beings. Reason why these people **without** the spiritual faculties **need methods and techniques or object of meditation** to **anchor** the mind so that it is **not heedlessly lost in thoughts**. If the methods and techniques are **not awareness based** then it may lead to concentration or Samatha bhavana.

5. Those who have mental hindrances can still meditate, but they need to use some **skilful means** to keep the **mental hindrances temporarily** at bay. E.g. through using the **mind sweeping** method combining with metta. For more details to refer to the **transcript blue book on meditation** by Bro Teoh dated 12 September 2013.

B. Road map to understanding the Buddha's teaching.

1. **Vipassana meditation: 'Vi'** stands for the **3 universal characteristics** of nature – anicca (impermanence), dukkha (suffering) and anatta (non-self or empty nature). These **3 universal characteristics** is inherent in all phenomena and is **everywhere in midst of life and nature**. 'Pasana' means **to insight** into. Thus vipassana means to insight into the 3 universal characteristics of nature. Vipassana **cannot be practiced** because it **not a knowledge**. Instead it is an **awakening** borne of the **direct seeing** or an **insight** through the **silent mind** leading to **penetrative wisdom** to **awaken** to the 3 universal characteristics of nature.
2. There are **3 phases or stages** to **cultivate** the Buddha's teaching:
 - A) Phase 1 is **Pariyatti**, which is the **learning** of the teaching/dhamma.
 - B) Phase 2 is **Patipatti**, which is **to put what you have learnt into practice**. (To cultivate the teaching so that you can develop the awakening).
 - C) Phase 3 is **Pativedha**, which is the **fruition of your hard work**. You get to live the noble life of an enlightened being.
3. **Pariyatti**: the Buddha has **cultivated** for almost **4 worlds cycles** to perfect himself to be the **fully enlightened** one, a **Samasambuddha** with **perfect virtues and wisdom**. We must therefore have **great respect** and **gratitude** towards the Buddha. Because of that the Buddha was able to **summarize** all his **understanding** into just **the 4 noble truths**. **Noble truths** are truths that **can make** you **noble ones** or **enlightened** ones. Enlightened ones have **noble qualities** as stated in the **noble eightfold path**. The enlightened ones have right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, the 4 right efforts, right sati and right Samadhi.
4. These **4 noble truths** are the **essence** of Buddha's teaching. It **summarizes** to us all of the **mundane** and **supra mundane aspects of life**. It is like telling us the **secret of life**. **Understanding** these 4 Noble Truths will lead us to **deeply understand** life. It can also lead to awakening or enlightenment in the here and the now. The **1st Noble truth** explains to us the **prevalence of suffering (dukkha)** and the **realities of life and existence**. The **8 realities** that **can condition suffering** are *birth, old age, sickness and death, separation from loved ones and one's possessions, when we are with people whom we don't like, (when our expectations in life are not met, when we cannot get what we want and when things don't go your way) and finally, in short the 5 grasping aggregates of form and mind are dukkha.*
5. The Buddha meditated and awakened. He realized that the **so called human being** (the physical body and mind, this **5 aggregates of form and mind**) is **not a permanent unchanging entity** for one to grasp on to as the 'I' and the 'Me' for it is **dependent originating, a condition arising phenomenon** hence it is **impermanent** and it **leads to suffering**. This 5 aggregates of form and mind is only a karmically conditioned 'vehicle and tool' for us to come to this existential world to **experience karma, live life** and **develop** the **cultivation**.

6. In short it is due to your **self-delusion** which conditions you to believe, this **human being is real**. Thus when you cling to these **5 aggregates**, you **suffer**. In the Mahayana tradition, it is said that **the 5 aggregates are empty**. As a human being, you have a physical body and a mind. Mind has 4 aggregates i.e. feeling (vedana), perception (sanna), mental thinking, activities and states (sankhara) and consciousness (vinanam). We can be **conscious** of what you hear, see, taste, smell, tactile feeling and think. These **makes up a human being**. The **three conditions** that make this **being come to life** are **a functional physical body**; **a consciousness** trapped inside to arise the **aggregate of mind** and the **karmic force** or **life force** from **our karmic nature**. The karmic force give rise to your heartbeat which is your pulse of life.
7. The 2nd Noble truth explains the **cause** of suffering. The main cause is **craving**, conditioned by **self-delusion** or **ignorance**. The 3rd Noble truth says **suffering need not be** if **you have understanding** of his teaching, thus able to live the life of an enlightened being, then life is beautiful and meaningful. You will have joy, inner peace, awareness, love and understanding. The 4th Noble truth explains the way out of suffering which is what the meditation is i.e. the noble eightfold path. When you cultivate this Noble 8-Fold Path, it will lead to the end of all suffering.
8. When you have wisdom borne of this Noble 8-Fold Path cultivation, you will come to realize “hey no you hey no me”. This ‘body and mind’, the so called **human being** is not ‘you’ but it is subject to karma. The true mind is never born hence it never dies. The **phenomenal world of consciousness** is unreal and empty hence only leads to suffering when one lack wisdom.
9. People **suffer because** they **hold** and **cling**. Metaphorically it is like holding on to a red **hot burning iron ball**, it will **burns** and **torment** you. So if you **hold** on to the *so called problem* and **worry** about it, this is **stupidity**. On the other hand, when you **don’t hold**, it is **not tormenting** you, you are **at peace** (i.e. when you are without fear, worry and anxiety, etc.), then there is **clarity** to allow you **to act** with **understanding** and **wisdom**. But it does **not mean** the **problem is gone**. E.g., financial problem and health problems, which **needs wisdom** to resolve them. You must first **accept them** as one of those **8 realities** of the **1st Noble truth**. You **then learn** to **see things as they are**, and **develop the wisdom** to **come to terms with these realities**. The one who does not suffer, have the wisdom to deal with it. So **don’t** deludedly cling on to the **wrong thoughts** (greed, hatred, delusion) because it will **cause you suffering** and yet it **won’t solve** your so called **problem**. *Do what you need to do and explore your best options to resolve things amicably with wisdom and understanding following Noble 8-Fold Path*. Learn to **love yourself** through having **right thoughts** instead of **making yourself miserable** through **thinking the wrong thoughts**. **Wrong thoughts** are *thoughts that condition your fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow and lamentation etc.*
10. The cause of suffering (2nd noble truth) is attachment and clinging to the form and mind. Whatever that happens in life, you need *to accept the reality of the moment with understanding first* and **not have wrong thoughts** to **torment** yourself. Without fear etc., you **can act with wisdom**, **not according to memory** and **conditionings**. Without **right view**, due to **self-delusion**, there is **no self-love**, thus **you stir your mind** further with more **negativity** of thoughts and emotions. This **unwholesomeness only leads to more suffering**. Instead you need to use the **dhamma way to free your mind**. With **right understanding**, **love yourself** through not creating **unnecessary suffering**, you **realize suffering need not be**, suffering is created through your **own ignorance** that conditions you to cling and worry etc. When you *know the cause of suffering* you can deal with it via **understanding**. With this **understanding**, **you can live life with wisdom**.

11. Brother Teoh explained the difference between the **heart** and the **mind**. To refer to his early blue transcript book for more details. The **heart** is where **life force resides**, it is the **seat of consciousness**. When it comes, it **pumps your heart** and then **sends the blood** to all your **organs** and **nourish** them. If destructive karma comes, the **body system shuts down**, **consciousness** leaves the form which is dysfunctional (death occur). But in actual fact no one dies. When you meditate, all this will be very clear. You will be able to see the 12 links of the law of dependent origination clearly; how ignorance gives rise to sankhara then mental consciousness, namarupa, etc.
12. Mind is the forerunner of all things, mind is chief. The phenomenal world of consciousness is impermanent, because it is dependent originating. If you attach to the 5 aggregates, you suffer. As they are impermanent, they are not real, not you, non-self and empty for they are all **causal phenomenal**. As real as it can be, only in the moment, and split second it is dead and gone. As you meditate, you will awaken to all this.
13. When you understand the cause of suffering, you can resolve all those so called 'problem' caused by the **8 realities** of the 1st noble truth. The 3rd Noble truth explains that **suffering need not be**. Enlightenment in the here and now is possible, cessation of form and mind, nibbana (the supramundane state) can be realized by the wise each for themselves. You can confront death with understanding. You can laugh at the dead.
14. Even after you have insight into the 3 characteristics of nature, you **still need to cultivate** the **noble eightfold path** to bring about the end of suffering. It is of utmost importance to have **right views**.
(Above draft outline short notes are prepared by Sister Chong Phey Yuen.)