1. Brother Teoh went through last Thursday’s outline short notes.

2. Bro Teoh reminded kalyanamittas that the silent mind (which is the true mind) is the meditative mind. You just need to relax, aware and maintain awareness for as long as possible, and trust your nature to do the meditation.

3. Don’t use your thinking mind to try to know. Even when thoughts arise, you just let everything be. Any sense door contact of the mind, just be aware. Otherwise, upon contact, ignorance would condition the 12 links (dependent origination) and the chain of sankhara thinking activities will follow suit.

4. It is important to train the mind until mind enters sati, then stabilize it to realize passaddhi by not trying to know while in meditation. When you are out from meditation, you can use the stability of mindfulness to cultivate the daily mindfulness and to develop the 1st and 2nd turning wisdom of suttamaya panna and cintamaya panna leading to the initial wisdom (yonisomanasikara).

5. When you ‘want’ to enter the meditative state, that ‘wanting’ is actually a craving within the mind.

6. Brother Teoh advised kalyanamittas to have strong faith and to determine to be ever mindful. This determination is essential for the cultivation of the daily mindfulness and the initial wisdom. To be constantly meditative and ever mindful in the midst of our daily activities is vital as heedfulness is the path to the deathless, and the heedful never dies.

7. Brother Teoh shared his experience regarding his determination to be ever mindful in the early years of his cultivation. After two weeks of continuous mindfulness training (with intention to be ever mindful), the awareness came. He had a good religious’ routine covering continuous daily mindfulness of all movements, actions and activities throughout the day, from the moment he woke up to the moment he slept at night. Later on even when his body goes into the sleeping mode he was still able to maintain clear awareness of all his mundane mind’s subconscious and unconscious mental releases. He was fully aware throughout the night until upon ‘waking up’ from the sleep the next morning and he was aware of the same last thought arising just before he ‘wakes up’ as if he didn’t really sleep. Yes! It was as if he never slept throughout the night, as his awareness was very clear and stable all the while. This is the continuous awareness one needs to develop. That’s why Bro. Teoh said, ‘the 3rd support which is the continuous 24 hours’ mindfulness is possible’.

8. There is a slight difference in the 4 noble truths stated in the Theravada tradition and the Mahayana tradition. In Theravada, first is dukkha (un satisfactoriness); second is samudaya, (the cause of suffering which is craving); third is nirodha (cessation); fourth is magga (path, the Noble eightfold path). Whereas in Mahayana, the second noble truth is not ‘the cause of suffering is craving’ but changed to ‘accumulation through memory as the cause of suffering’. The accumulation of one’s fear, phobia, scars of memory, insecurity, anxiety and all the other psychological memories are the cause of suffering. Those who experience depression will understand this because they have strong tendencies
towards these accumulated mind states (which are wrong thoughts) that conditioned their suffering, misery etc. leading to their depression and suicidal thoughts.

9. Human beings crave for security leading to a sense of insecurity. This insecurity is inherent in human beings. Insecurity breeds fear. Fear of being born leading to old age, sickness and death; fear of death, fear of losing our job, fear of failure, fear of danger and fear of losing our love ones and wealth (separation), etc. But with dharma in the heart, you just need to have total trust in the dharma. Trust your nature especially your karma nature to take care of you (your life).

10. Meditate and develop the understanding of life especially what the form and mind is? With dharma, you will know who you are and what you are and you will also understand all the nature’s laws that governs life and existence. With this, you will understand life and you are able to live life well. That is, how to develop the understanding to live a good and successful life. Not only success in the materialistic aspect of life but also in the spiritual aspect of life which is most important. With spiritual understanding of the four noble truths and eightfold noble path, life is beautiful, meaningful, wonderful and complete.

11. When you continuously cultivate the true dharma, you will have understanding, love, joy, faith and gratitude towards the triple gem, your teachers, your other guides and fellow kalyanamittas. You will also develop all virtues and wholesomeness. You will be able to live a very good and rather meaningful life of joy, peace, tranquility and happiness. No more suffering and no more problems and worries. This is wisdom leading to liberation of mind.

12. On the other hand, when you do not understand life, there is selfishness, emotions and arrogance in the mind. Everything that you do is for self-benefit only. These unwholesome acts filled with delusion will only create more evil thoughts, further suffering and misery when you cannot get what you want or wish for. Evil roots of greed, hatred and delusion is inherent within this deluded mundane mind. Out of fear, more negative karma is being created. These karmic fruitions cause you to be afflicted and suffer, not able to have peace and joy in life.

13. It is important to understand, that the ‘doing’ while in meditation is always by the thought and when thoughts are active there is no real meditation. Without thought, there is only this pure awareness, so no fear, worry and anxiety. Instead there is only peace, tranquility, joy, inner awareness and the stillness, which is the meditative state.

14. When you use thought, use it to arise the appropriate ‘right thought’ to develop wholesomeness, virtues, kindness, respect, gratitude and thus be a blessing to all. These wholesome mental states that you arise will propel you to be on the path to ultimate liberation. Whereas wrong thoughts have greed, hatred and delusion, born of ignorance; they only lead to afflicting negative emotions, and is the total opposite of the noble eightfold path practices.

15. A kalyanamitta asked Brother Teoh regarding the discussion on taking up jobs deemed unwholesome (wrong livelihood) in their discussion group. Brother Teoh advised (basing on his own understanding) the most important criterion to look at is your mental intention or cetena. Cetena is what causes karma. If your mental intention has the 3 evil roots, it will cause negativity of karma. If your intention is wholesome (e.g. to help people), then it is okay. If it involves improper livelihood, then you have to
decide whether taking up this job is conducive for your cultivation or not? Most importantly, is your own understanding of the dharma and your ability to notice your own defilements is what matters.

16. For example, taking vegetarian. Some say being vegetarian shows a more compassionate heart. Some argue that this is not necessary. Eventually, it all boils down to the level of your own understanding of whether to be vegetarian or not. To what extent you are able to notice your own defilements (especially the gross ones) when they arise is most important. This immediate cultivation is essential. If even the gross defilements also you are unable to handle, then there is not much meaning to go to that level of compassion as going vegetarian. Always understand the mental intention behind all that you do. It is not ‘one size fits all’ and you must act with understanding. Never violate the nature’s law of karma or certain important society’s law as they can lead to negative karmic consequences. Acting just to impress others that you are outwardly more compassionate or spiritual is of not much value because this is form dharma, not mind dharma.

17. The Buddha’s teaching of keeping precepts is for training the mind in mindfulness. For example, the first precept, ‘I undertake the training rule to refrain from taking the life of any living creatures’ is for you to develop your mindfulness and take this precept seriously because it is a training rule and you have to exercise sense restraint. You can also further investigate into it, put it to test, and establish a deep understanding, as to why this precept is being introduced by the Buddha. Who kill? What type of person will violate this precept? A selfish, deluded and violent person who has the evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion. This imply the breaking of this precept leads to major evil karmic consequences following dhammapada verse 1.

18. When you can keep precepts well and are ever mindful in your daily life, you will have a deeper understanding of the essential dharma and thus you will have the wisdom to choose the right job with the right livelihood. In the case of working as sale personnel for a Sport Toto outlet (as per your group’s discussion), my personally advice is – no problem because it is a legal entity approved by the government and it is a proper listed company. [But please don’t quote me (unless you have the understanding) because this topic can be sensitive.]

In this particular case, your mental intention is sincere and simple because it is an honorable sale job with an established company of legal status. Sport Toto had also done a lot of wholesome corporate social responsibility and activities. If after taking up the job, then you think a ‘wrong thought’ which makes you remorseful, then you are creating your own unnecessary mental suffering (worrying, etc.) via your wrong thoughts.

(Above outline short notes draft was prepared by Sister Phey Yuen)