

Outline Short Notes for Brother Teoh's 15 Aug 2019 Thursday Class

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190815.mp3>

1. The **key to successful meditation** are the **4 supports** for *awareness based meditation*: **Relax, Aware, 24Hours** and **Trust**. You may listen to the recording for more instructions on preparation before meditation.
2. Sis **Angie's question**: When she is relaxed, she can be mindful of her breathing very clearly and she can also see the 3 universal characteristics of impermanence, non-self and Dukkha. Hope Bro. Teoh could guide her further.
3. **Bro. Teoh replied**: Can you explain *how you are able to see the 3 universal characteristics*?
4. Angie replied by saying, *when she just let things be, the mind settled down and becomes very peaceful and quiet* but when she **clings** on to it, the **thinking** or *sankhara activities* will **perpetuate** and **proliferate** and it is as if, when you keep chasing after the thinking, you make it into a big issue. This was how she gets entangle.
5. **Bro Teoh**: You may *maintain meditative silent, without thought to observe and develop* the **contemplative understanding** via *relating what you observed to the essential dharma*. This observation and contemplation can give you some *initial 2nd turning wisdom's understanding* and this *2nd turning wisdom* can be **stabilized** if one continue to **contemplate** after the **formal meditation** to develop the **clearer** understanding.
6. Bro. Teoh added that, it will be **better if the understanding** can come about via the **direct seeing** when you are **in a meditative state of deeper silence**. This type of **wisdom** is **more penetrative**. After that, when one reflected into it, the *understanding become very different*, it is **very penetrative and more stable**. However, this state is rather difficult to realize. The 1st and 2nd turnings wisdom, which is easier, can lead to the **arising** of the **initial wisdom (yonisomanasikara)** needed to **stabilize** your **daily mindfulness** leading to **step 5** of the **avijja sutta**, which is **sati sampajanna**.
7. All sankhara are of *the nature to arise and pass away*. If you **give meaning and follow** the sankhara **without** the **requisite understanding**, you will **get yourself entangled** with the *clinging and suffering*. **Sabba sankhara anicca**, so it is **not** a *permanent unchanging entity*, not 'I' and not 'Me'. One must **reflect** until this **understanding** becomes **very clear within** one's **daily mindfulness** contemplation.
8. How do we cultivate this contemplation? We can do it **when we are alone, in a quiet setting** or **on a silent morning** when *others are still asleep*. We can sit in a quiet place or walk or pace up and down slowly, *reflecting via inquiry* on the dharma that Lord Buddha had taught us. Through **contemplation and reflection**, **clear understanding** and **joy** will arise **as the beautiful dharma unfold**. After that **whenever we encounter similar sense experiences or situations**, our **understanding (yonisomanasikara)** will **prompt us** not to **react** via *telling us that all phenomena exhibit the 3 universal characteristics of nature*.
9. This **straightening of view** will **liberate one's mind**. One will understand, there is **nobody inside** this form and mind to *cling, grasp and hold*. The dharma on: **Sabba sankhara anicca, Sabba sankhara dukkha and Sabba dhamma anatta** will **be very clear** and there will be **no more intention to be right** or to **argue with others**. Unless there are **conditions** for it to **bring about wholesomeness to help** out in the situation, one **will not do anything inappropriate**. One will only arise the **understanding to act appropriately** with **wisdom following N8FP**. With this understanding, one is able to **apply this living dharma** to live *our daily life*. **Wisdom (yonisomanasikara)** at the **moment of sense experience** will **prompt us to act according** to **wisdom and understanding**, that *'things are the way they are; can't be otherwise'*. The **mind** will be **at peace** and have the **understanding to act and resolving all life issues and situations amicably** with *right speech, thought and action*.

10. The **4 right efforts** are important cultivation needed to develop **sense restraint** leading to the *right thought, speech and action*. The first 2 **right efforts** are to deal with **defilements** first. The **1st right effort** is to **abandon** the *wrong thought, speech and action* that **had arisen**. To do that one must understand **what constitute evil?** And one must also have a very **stable daily mindfulness** to see those defilements. The **3 evil roots** of Greed, Hatred and Delusion are the **root of all evil**. One therefore need to expand on the **3 evil roots** until it is very clear (for more details please do listen to the recording). The **5 ways to abandon** the wrong thought as taught by the Buddha must be cultivated. This is the beginning of cultivation.

11. The Buddha taught **5 ways** to ABANDON unwholesome thoughts, speech and action are:

- **1st way:** To think of the **direct opposite** wholesome thought, (like hatred with love, lust with contentment etc.)
- **2nd way:** To think of the **consequences** of *holding on* to that **wrong thought**. (However, both 1st and 2nd ways are still thought based and not the meditative way.)
- **3rd way:** Just **aware** (this is the meditation way). The moment one is aware, there are no more condition for the *defilements to proliferate*, the *defilement will cease* due to the *law of dependent origination*. However, this type of wisdom is *not penetrative enough*.
- **4th way:** To trace the **origination** factors then **retrospectively** reverse it. From our *6 sense doors*, especially our *seeing, hearing and thought (recall through memory) consciousness*, we can see *how the unwholesome mind state of angry, hatred and fear, etc. arise* through our **wrong view**. According to the Satipatthana Sutta, if one had developed the **mindfulness of the 6 internal and 6 external sense bases**, one will have the **ability to know how this defilement come to be**, then one will *know how to reverse it retrospectively* through *right view or right understanding developed after contemplating – why did I stir my mind?* Through **reflection and contemplation**, one will understands that **people are the way they are** and **the world is the world** – *conditions like that, things will be like that*. One must have this **right view** to accept the **reality of the moment** via seeing **things as they are** (as advised by the Buddha) in order to be **peaceful**.
- **5th way:** If all the above 4 ways also cannot help you, then you must **determine strongly** through your **will power** to abandon it. That is with tongue against your palate determine strongly to abandon it.

The Four Right Exertions		
	<i>un arisen</i>	<i>arisen</i>
<i>unwholesome states of mind</i>	prevent	abandon
<i>wholesome states of mind</i>	cultivate	refine upon

12.

13. The **1st right effort** is to cultivate the **above 5 ways** as taught by the Buddha to **abandon** the **wrong thought** that has arisen. The 3rd and the 4th ways are **meditative ways** leading to wisdom and transformation.

14. The **2nd right effort** is the *right effort* to **prevent** all the wrong thought, speech and action from arising. With *yonisomanasikara*, at the **moment of sense experience**, this *initial wisdom* will **prompt you** to understand how this **evil wrong thought** will lead to *karmic negativity* that will make us suffer. All these understanding will arise, and you will be **able to prevent all these wrong thoughts** from arising.
15. The **3rd right effort** is the *right effort* to **cultivate** or **arise** the *wholesome thought, speech and action* that are **still not in us** through cultivating the N8FP. One need to know clearly what constitute right thought, speech and action, so that one will know how to cultivate them. All your **virtuous thoughts** are **right thoughts**. All *proper, gentle, wholesome, kind and pleasant speeches* that lead to **love, understanding and harmony** are **right speeches**. All generous, kind, sincere and good actions are right actions.
16. The **4th right effort**: right effort to **refine upon** whatever right action speech and thought that are already in you as there are always room for improvement.
17. Adam's **1st question** is about fear. Which category of the 3 evil roots is fear classified under?
18. Bro Teoh explained, '*Fear is classified under the evil root of delusion*'. When one **doesn't understand truth**, there is fear. Fear about the future. Fear of death etc.
19. Adam's **2nd question**: Regarding a friend of his, clinging strongly to her success. Should she follow her heart or her thoughts? Bro. Teoh replied, 'Yes, she should follow her heart which is the **conscience** (the good part). The **mundane mind** (your thoughts) before you are **enlightened** is always *cunning, selfish and deluded (having evil roots)*. **Conscience** can comes up and prompt us to **prevent you** from **making mistake**. However, the **conscious mundane mind** with *its view, opinion, and conditioning* and *believe system is deluded and it is the one that always very keen to condition you into negativity*. The heart is always soothing, calm and peaceful whereas the **deluded mundane mind** is usually selfish, deluded, emotional and noisy and it also chatters a lot.
20. Continuation of question 2): Adam helped a friend overcome her depression and she no longer clinging to her success, but she has a different faith.
21. Bro. **Teoh replied**, changes will happen to her when you change, then with her faith in you, she will change too. Dharma is nature's truth or law. The proper application of Dharma can lead to a *good life*, which means be successful in whatever you do, whatever you want to achieve or develop as a career. **Success in life** normally covers the whole lot of **materialistic successes** that normal living being look forward to. Like *academic success, career success, financial success, relationship success* and *having a harmonious family unit*, etc. However, **without the spiritual understanding, your life is still incomplete**. You may be **successful, materialistically**, but if you **do not** follow the **righteous way**, there will be **karmic repercussions**, and you *may lose them after a while*. Without the spiritual understanding when *one is confronted with the realities of life*, as outlined in the 1st noble truth, one will also suffer. The **8 realities** are: *old age, sickness and death, separation from love ones and prized possessions, etc*. When you are *with someone whom you do not like and can't get along with*. When you *cannot get what you want*, are you still peaceful and happy? **Spiritual success** can allow one to have the **ability to lead a good and comfortable life free of all worry and suffering**. Live the life of a **noble one (an enlightened being)** - a life of *tranquillity stillness, peacefulness, joy, happiness and understanding*. Free from all suffering.
22. **Adam's 3rd question**: How do we cultivate goodness (like healing people) wisely?
23. **Bro Teoh**: To you, you are applying *what you think* is goodness (like healing others) to help people. But this is **goodness according to you**. The Dharma way is different. The **dharma way** is just **explaining to people the dharma** to let them have the *understanding* to solve their problem through that understanding. If they do not have the understanding, they will always look for you to help them solve their problem. To *heal others* with **thought energy** may get you **entangle** with their **negative karmic energy** and *some of these karmic energy may have karmic consequences*. The healer must have the **appropriate wisdom and understanding**, otherwise they may get into trouble themselves. It is **advisable**

to develop the **Dharma understanding** first and only manifest to do something **appropriate** when the **conditions** are there for you to help others. To have a better understanding of this, please do listen to the audio recording shared by Bro Teoh on Master Hsuan Hua's experience.

24. Sister Angie asked about this ***anatta nature that the Buddha taught***.
25. Bro. Teoh explained that one can see this anatta nature in your 5 aggregates of form and mind. They exhibit the 3-universal characteristics. Hence, it is **not you** for they go the way of nature. When feeling changes you didn't die, so feeling cannot be you. Same with perception, sankhara and consciousness. This physical body (rupa) made from 4 elements, can't be you either. Hence, these 5 aggregates of form and mind are **non-self**. If one grasp and cling, it will lead to suffering because it is **not a permanent unchanging entity**. They are dependent originating, condition arising and a causal phenomenon; when condition is there, it arise, if it is not there it ceases to be.
26. Then what is this 5 aggregates of form and mind? This is a karmically conditioned vehicle and a tool for us to come to this existential world, so use it and **not be deluded by it**.
25. Anatta means, it is not a permanent unchanging entity that you can call, "this is 'Me', this is 'I'. No, this does not belong to you". This one is non-self but it is **not nothingness**, it is **not no self**, because there is **such a thing as a human being**. *Human being exists and it is subject to karma*. True nature is **not subject** to karma. This is a nature which is beyond the form and mind, and **this eternal nature** is also anatta, not a being, not a permanent unchanging entity, although it is the unconditioned. Your **understanding will deepen** when your **mindfulness is very stable**. Only *when you go through the cessation*, you **can only truly understand what anatta is**. Even a glimpse of it will lead to the change of lineage and transform your form and mind into an ariya (a noble or enlightened being).
26. The **initial wisdom (yonisomanasikara) borne of listening to the dharma and Dharma contemplation** leading to the **1st and 2nd turnings wisdom is very important**. **Without this initial wisdom the daily mindfulness cannot stabilize and the glimpse of cessation also cannot arise**. For the 3rd turning wisdom (Bhavanamaya panna) to arise, you must go through the **direct seeing** awakening via the **silent mind** while in the **meditative state**. Only after realizing the *cessation of Nibbana* can the form and mind *understand the unconditioned*. After that the egoic mind will have no power over you as this **self-delusion** has been completely rooted out.
27. Regarding the recent protestors and unrest in Hong Kong. **People are just the way they are. Not right or wrong**. These are just *their views, their opinions of things, their conditioning and their ideology*. When they are so conditioned, they will react that way, that's it, finished! Let **society evolved on its own**. We **can contribute** by radiate *love and metta* and **sharing merits** after our dharma classes. We do our best, we share and transfer merits to make the *world a better place through goodness and virtue* in **our heart**. It is important that **every individual must change** for the **better in order** to have a better **collective consciousness** with *more understanding, virtue and less negativity*. This is also the reason why J. Krishnamurti said, *'the individual must change, for society to change as we are the summation of the collective consciousness of the society'*.
28. May there be love, joy and peace within their heart. Keep on radiating all these wholesomeness and virtue and it will have its effect. Radiate to all beings starting from your *love ones, our kalyanamittas, and cultivators* and to all beings on this planet, our mother Earth. Wishing everybody have the **good understanding** of life and a **kind heart** to bring about **more peace to all**. May all beings on this planet have more **goodness and kindness in their hearts**.

29. All of you have this **kind heart** but you **do not know how to generate it**, to make it strong and powerful so that it can open up and be a blessing to the world.

(The above draft outline short notes was prepared by Sister Tammy)