

## Outline Short Notes for Bro Teoh's 29 Aug 2019 Thursday class

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190829.mp3>

- 1) Bro Teoh advised Tammy to **forget** about her various thoughts - thought behind a thought telling her this and that because this is **not** mindfulness. When **thought is active** how **can you be mindful?** When she thinks she is **mindful**, actually it is the **thought that is telling her** what the previous thoughts are. **But if you are aware**, it is **different**. That is, when you **have developed** the **ability** to be **aware**, it is just silently aware. The *awareness that is aware of the whole thing has no words, no verbalisation, completely quiet*. While the thought has a lot of words, concepts, ideas and verbalisations. The background **awareness** which is **quiet** is **aware** of the **arising** thought.
- 2) If she has developed the **initial wisdom** she will be **very different**. She **will be able** to **understand** *what is going on in her mind*. But **most people don't** have **this ability**. This **initial wisdom** is very powerful. Without this initial wisdom, the **egoic thought** will **have power** to **deceive** you.
- 3) Is there is a thinker behind the thought? You **have to silent your mind completely**, in order to **develop the ability to be aware**. Then you will **come to understand** that **thoughts are response** to *memory*. **Without memory** there is **no thought**. That is the reason why a **new born child** with **no memory** and *conditioning* **has no thought**. Thought arise when we stir our mind due to our views opinions and conditioning. With **mindfulness** (awareness) we can see this movements clearly.
- 4) **Everything the mind can do is Sankhara**. The **content** of consciousness is Sankhara, which means the aggregates of feeling and perception are part of Sankhara. That is why they have to use so many English words to translate it. **Karmic volition** is one of the words. Volition is intention. **Mental activities** like thinking, planning and scheming, etc. is another word. **Mental states or mind states** is another word. Our mind can experience all the various mind states like peaceful, silence, tranquillity, sadness, anger, restlessness, fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow and lamentations, etc. Some are wholesome and some are unwholesome. The good mind states are piti, sukha, tranquillity and stillness of mind, peacefulness and calmness. **Mental formation** is another **word**. . Mind can form pictures - mental images. These are all part of Sankhara. But Sankhara is a **complete word** while the English translation *requires so many words to express its meaning*. Reason why the Buddha only uses this one word Sankhara under his teaching when he frequently mentioned, '*Sabbe sankhara annica, Sabbe Sankhara dukkha and Sabbe dhamma anatta*'.
- 5) All these Sankhara activities, be it mental states, mental intentions, mental formations, mental activities, etc. they arise and pass away very fast. Reason why the Buddha said, '*All of Sankhara is impermanent*'. If you give meaning, attach and cling on to them via self-delusion, suffering or dukkha will arise. And because it is impermanent, it is **not a permanent unchanging entity**, hence its **anatta or non-self** nature.
- 6) Pure feeling is before the emotion. There are 3 types of feeling - pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. What is pleasant feeling? It is a **positive craving** (sensual desire), a movement away

from the **pure** feeling. A pure feeling is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. When the mind stirred because you **like** that **good or pleasant** feeling, it becomes a **sensual desire (a mental hindrance)**. But pain and numbness are mental states that you dislike, so you label it **negatively** as **unpleasant feeling** which you **dislike** (also a **mental hindrance**). The **neutral feeling** can be due to **indifference**, you are neither happy nor unhappy because it **has nothing to do with you** or **doesn't concern** you. So the egoic mind is **not stirred**, you just feel normal. But the **2<sup>nd</sup> type of neutral feeling** which is **Equanimity** is different. It is borne of wisdom and because of that the mind states is always in the state of equanimity because it has the wisdom to understand. When it understands, it is neither positive nor negative. It does not stir **but it is also not** something you **resist or suppress** or **don't want to arise**. Bro Teoh cited Sister Soo's earlier sharing on her India pilgrimage trip as an example. Her thought was so still, as if no thought, neither happy nor unhappy but when she was mobbed and surrounded by beggars, she cringed and reacted with fear. In her case, she suppressed and willed her intention to be in such conditioned state, which is **not** a free mind. The true **equanimity enlightenment factor** is borne of wisdom. The **wisdom and understanding will have the ability to accept things as they are**, *to allow you to see things as they are, to be with the moment, to experience everything the way it is*. You are **always be at peace**. The mind **will not complain**. You will understand and **not be agitated** or **become affected** by what happen. You can **maintain** the **peace within** at all **time**. Then your **daily mindfulness** can **stabilize**. That's the meaning of **upekkha, the enlightenment factor** of equanimity, borne of wisdom that prevents you **from reacting to sense experience** while in the midst of daily life. You can have **more moments of silence, stillness** and **space** between thoughts. Then **specific phenomena awareness** and **spacious awareness** (without a centre) keep on arising.

- 7) Bro Teoh urged us to develop the **contemplative** (2<sup>nd</sup> turning) and the **meditative** (3<sup>rd</sup> turning) **wisdom/understanding** of Sankhara. Inquire deeply, what is Sankhara? What the Buddha mean by Sankhara? The texts give many **vague** explanations, which is **too wide a topic**. Difficult for most people. Nobody can really explain it clearly. But as you meditate you can develop the deep understanding. Bro Teoh saw them in his meditation and understand the deep **meaning of Sankhara**. Sankhara as defined by the Buddha is, *'everything the mind can do including feeling and perception'*. These *two aggregates of feeling and perception* are separated out because they are important aggregates of mind. Feeling is stated in his teaching, under the **2<sup>nd</sup> foundation of mindfulness** on feelings (Vedananupassana). **When feeling has moved to pleasant or unpleasant, you must be aware**. It has already stirred or reacted. The mind has already developed the first two **mental hindrances** of sensual desires and ill-will. Pleasant feeling is sensual desire and unpleasant feeling is ill-will. If you understand this, next is to develop the **5 opposite spiritual faculties to counter it** and the **meditative understanding to root it out via straightening** our views with wisdom. Perception brings the external form or rupa into the mind.
- 8) Train the mind to develop the **5 spiritual faculties** (Saddha, Viriya, Sati, Samadhi and Panna). The unshakeable faith in the Buddha's teaching will **allow** you to understand the **spiritual teaching** and **drive you to cultivate sati** and **Samadhi** when you see the **importance** of this cultivation.

- 9) Bro Teoh explained further to Tammy that *once you have realise the true mind*, this question of yours will be **self-answered**. These are all **thought based** mind states **not the real sati or awareness**. When you are **fully aware** to **experience** the silent, the stillness, the tranquillity, etc. (especially when you go through the cessation, which is the enlightenment, even one glimpse is enough), the **wisdom that arise will enable you to understand clearly straight away**. Even the wisdom of a sotapan or a sakadagami – will enable them to know that there is: **“hey no you, hey no me!” There is nobody inside. Non-self is not no self and it is also not nothingness**. There is a form and mind but this **form and mind is not you**. This is **not a permanent unchanging** entity. There is no thinker behind the thought. (For more details please refer to the **18 August 2019** SJBA video Dharma Talk delivered by Bro Teoh on the topic: *‘The 3 Turnings of the 4 Noble Truths’* which is **highly recommended** to listen to, especially to the **beautiful answers** to the 2 questions on, the **glimpse** of Nibbana (4 Noble Truth), its **cessation** and the **egoic mind** towards the end.
- 10) Sis Tammy further shared about her thoughts arising and passing away moment to moment, anger comes and goes but **when she grasps it, gives it meaning**, it proliferates and deceive her into karmic negativity. She contemplated that she just needs to be aware and let it be. No need to proliferate it.
- 11) Bro Teoh reply, when you understand, *‘Sabbe sankhara anicca, Sabbe sankhara dukkha*, i.e. all Sankhara are impermanent and leads to suffering, then **you will not think** unless you *want to reflect and contemplate to develop the wisdom and understanding or arise to help people*. The three ways of right conduct - right thought, right speech and right action will be there if you have developed the cultivation appropriately. You will know how to arise them.
- 12) Sis Tammy recalled the topic on **cultivating virtues** as taught by Bro Teoh in their previous class and **with that understanding**, when *her unwholesome thoughts appeared*, she was able to be aware.
- 13) Bro Teoh reply, virtues like **gratitude, respect, kindness, gentleness, pleasantness, contentment, sincerity, etc.** and **wholesome thoughts** will **arise naturally** *when one has the Dharma*. Without Dharma, all are still **thought-based** because the **trying** to arise the right thoughts, to do good or be good, is still by the **egoic mind** which has **self-delusion**. How can, the egoic mind arise the right thoughts? Only **after having** the **Dharma understanding**, the **love and compassion** can be **sincere** and **genuine**. Before that Dharma understanding, it is a make-believe good according to one’s egoic mind. **When understanding unfolds**, *virtues become natural*. You are incapable of evil. Everything that you arise is for the good of many **without** the evil roots. Virtue is not according to you or who but according to nature’s law. Whatever that is without the **evil roots** is **virtue**. J Krishnamurti says, **‘the absence of evil is good’**. If you are incapable of evil, as advised by the Buddha says, *“Sabba pappasa akaranam”* (avoid all evil); naturally you will become good as you are incapable of evil. Mind without evil and ignorance, is naturally good. With the above understanding, Tammy can progress further.
- 14) **Develop mindfulness, heedfulness** and **understand what constitute evil**. Initially when you still have **wrong views** (self-delusion), unwholesome thoughts will arise first. You need to **think of**

**ways to abandon it** via cultivating the **4 right efforts** and the **5 ways to abandon** the unwholesome thoughts as taught by Lord Buddha.

15) **5 ways to abandon unwholesome thoughts, speeches and actions** as taught by Lord Buddha:

- Think of the **direct opposite** wholesome thoughts;
- Think of the **consequences** of holding on to those **wrong evil thoughts** which is the root of all evil that **can cause your karmic nature** to fall. Is that what you want?
- **Meditative way – just relax and maintain awareness** of whatever **mind state that arise**. Whatever emotions like fear, anger, lust etc. if you can be with it **without thoughts**, just aware, and then the emotion **without new energy to fuel it will slow down and cease to be**. No need to do anything because they are **dependent originating** mind states, **not intrinsic** in our nature.
- Trace the originating factors via mindfulness and reverse it retrospectively through **right view** and the right **understanding developed**. Through **wrong views**, the Buddha says, you stir your mind because you **cannot see things as they are, cannot accept them for what they are, and cannot accept the world for what it is. And you fail to understand, whatever that arises in this universe there are causes and conditions behind** (mainly **attributed** and **connected** to our **past karma**). If due to karma, then we **have to accept it for we are all born of our karma, heir to our karma, conditioned and supported** by our **karma** and we **reap** what we **sow**. This is how we develop the **understanding of the Law of Karma, Law of mind** or Dependent Origination and the **law of truth** or dharma to **accept** whatever happened. All phenomena are Conditions Arising, causal phenomenal. Even our 5 aggregates of form and mind are not what living beings think! Hey no you, hey no me! Everything is just a phenomena world of consciousness; dependent originating, not so real. Then you will understand why the Buddha says, **we must to learn ‘to see things as they are’** through the **direct seeing**, through the **silent mind to awaken** to the **truth**. When you can see things as they are **without** the words and concept, then there is nothing, because initially **before the delusion sets in**, there is **only the seeing consciousness, no one to see as yet**. The ego (atta) is **not** involved as yet, for *‘things are just the way they are’*. J Krishnamurti called it ‘What IS’ – the **Suchness** of things. Living beings are **deceived** by phenomenal world. The **moment you realize this, the whole of phenomenal world collapsed** in front of you and then the phenomenal world **will have no power** over you.
- If all above fails, the last resort is through **will power** to determine strongly to abandon it via tongue against palate!

16) **Adam’s 1<sup>st</sup> question**: His mind has this thought, to be **compassionate** and **he wants to help** a suffering cat. On the other hand, he realized, so much effort is involved in caring a cat. He is troubled by the thought - to help or not to help?

17) **Bro Teoh reply**: Who is trying to help? It is the thought. Don’t try to be a hero! There are millions of people suffering in this world. How many can you help? This is **not** help. The thought is telling you. I want to be compassionate. I want to help and be a blessing to all. The **ego wants!** When you don’t have the **understanding** of the **Dharma**, and you are **in no capacity** to help, Bro Teoh

advice is not to touch it **unless there is condition** to do something. Helping is very noble but without Dharma, one can still get themselves **entangled** with **karmic consequences**. (Do refer to Master Hsuan Hua case of our previous session for more understanding).

18) However, **if you have the conditions, passion and love to do it** and you **are gifted** from **your past**, then you can do it, the healing to help people. But you **must have the Dharma** because the **Dharma way is to teach them the Dharma**. If they understand, they will know how to help themselves. Bro Teoh advice, not to interfere through doing it for them. No point because it is their life, they better decide how they want to live their life. Unless there is condition, Bro Teoh will not help. Conditions mean in the past they have past karmic affinity and had done certain goodness, they have helped people before and these people recovered. In this life, they got into trouble. Therefore, in summary without conditions, don't get involved unless you are gifted in the past and you wanted to do that.

19) **Adam's 2<sup>nd</sup> question:** Related to his personal problem. He tried to advise people and people took it negatively and proliferated their unwholesome comments which he heard.

**20) Bro Teoh reply:** When they don't want you to help, don't interfere and be a 'kaypoh' or a busybody in the Hokkien dialect. You will get those unpleasant comments. Not everybody is what you think. Your thoughts will tell you all sorts of things. Always remember, unless **you have the Dharma** and **you are ready**, otherwise **what you can do to help is always very limited**.

21) The form and mind **even though not you** but it is **subject to karma** so it **still has to abide** by its **duty** towards this **law of karma**. If you can understand this, you can **develop the wisdom** to make use of it to live the **noble life**, to **truly live life to the fullest** – to experience the **3<sup>rd</sup> phase of Dharma**, Pativedha (to live the noble life of an ariya, an enlightened being).

22) Bro Teoh reviewed 15 Aug 2019 outline short notes as a revision with the class.

(Above outline short notes draft was prepared by Sis Poh Cheng)