

Outline Short notes of Thursday class dated 5 September 2019

Audio : <https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/Teoh-Thu-190905.mp3>

Youtube : Daily Mindfulness & Understanding Cultivation <https://youtu.be/KXe5eozyV1>

1. Bro Teoh discussed his **transcript book**: *75th lesson of Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra* (page 37 onwards). Miss Lee's question gave rise to conditions for Bro Teoh to explain further on the topic '**Daily mindfulness and understanding cultivation**'. Miss Lee asked, 'according to Bro Teoh meditation began only when one had the silent mind but if the **self-nature** and the **true mind** is already in pure seeing, do we still need to meditate from the silent mind?'
2. Bro Teoh replied, **the way she asked her question showed that she haven't really understood what Bro Teoh had taught her**. Her first question **should be**, '*is it true that unless you meditate until you can realize your silent mind, the real meditation hasn't started?*' That is what I said all these while; **not until your daily mindfulness is very stable, you cannot have (or realize) the silent mind**. If one is **caught in book knowledge and not coming from understanding**, such questions will arise. Her 2nd question is, '*if the mind is already quiet, does one have to stay with the silent mind?*' The **silent mind** is the **meditative mind** so **why is there any need to stay there?** Whatever that arises, the **silent mind** in pure awareness (which is **without thought**) can be aware of it clearly. This **silent observation** can give rise to **wisdom and understanding**.
3. It is only the thought that asks such question. **If it is through an understanding, one will know what to do**. One just has **to keep on developing** the **training of the mind** to be **mindful first**. Then, **stabilize it** until it is **ever mindful**. The **stabilizing of mind** may take a while unless the **five spiritual faculties** are already strongly established. So, one just needs to continue with the training. If one still wants to meditate before the spiritual faculties are established, then use the mind-sweeping method coupled with metta to train the mind. To decondition the heedless thinking initially. Then use anapanasati to stabilize the sati.
4. The **heedless mind needs to be trained** until it can enter the **meditative state**. One can also use anapanasati or any method or technique to anchor the mind. When **the mind becomes quiet** until even the **subtle breathing stops**, then the **mind can just be aware without any thought**. That is the silent mind.
5. **Whatever technique** that is **used to stabilize** the mind is **only an initial skillful mean**. Once the mind is trained the **awareness** will be there, then **maintaining** this **awareness** for **as long as you can, until the mind enters sati**. As long as one has **not trained** the mind to go into that state during the formal meditation, chances are, it will be very difficult for one **to develop the ability to be aware (or ever mindful) in the midst of life**.
6. When the mind has been trained to be aware without thought, whatever that **arises through the six sense doors** can be picked up **through the stirring of the mundane mind**. Awareness can observe all that is arising in the mind and understand how sankhara is being created via one's views and opinions.
7. Bro Teoh asked Miss Lee **whether she had trained her mind to be silent and still**. If she had **not done so**, then she **must stabilize it first** because **dharma knowledge and theory** cannot help one to **arrive at that state**. If she had to **train her mind** or **work on the spiritual faculties** to stabilize sati, then she had to do it first.
8. Even if one does bowing as a skillful means, **one must bow until mindfulness sets in**. Until the awareness and kaya (the bodily movements) **move as one in perfect harmony**.

9. The mind **has to be trained** until it is **ever mindful** and **constantly meditative**. **Not only during formal meditation sessions but also while** in the **midst of life** with sati and all the other spiritual faculties present. However, most meditators **can only do that** *when they slow everything down* during the *formal practice under retreat condition*. Hence, the moment they come out of the retreat they **can't maintain** those **calm states (heedful state)** and realize that they have lost it again and become heedless again while in the midst of life. This shows that most cultivators do not understand what the real meditation is. The **ever mindful**, constantly **meditative** (cultivating the Noble 8-fold Path) and **steadfast one** will realize the unconditioned state of Nibbana.
10. Sister Angie asked **what happens**, if while one is in the **constantly meditative mode practicing the Noble 8fold Path** but at times, there are **lapses in awareness**.
11. Bro Teoh answered that it is alright and it is not a problem. It does happen especially in the **initial stages** of cultivation. Be **aware of these lapses in awareness** and **return to heedfulness as soon as possible**. Bro Teoh mentioned that when he was cultivating in the early years, he was able to be **fully aware throughout** the day, constantly contemplating, reflecting and meditating. Then later **he shifted** his **contemplation and cultivation away from the essential dharma to focus on the cultivation of the Noble 8-fold Path**. He had to start reflecting on the **1st path factor of right view** with regards to the three spiritual laws of law of karma, law of mind and the law of dharma. (For more detail please do listen to the audio file from 1:01:08 onwards)
12. It is **important for one to understand the Law of Karma** through understanding **what constitutes evil** and then follow up with the practice of avoiding all evil, cultivating wholesomeness, virtue and meditation. That is the beginning of cultivation. Then cultivate the **three turnings of the Four Noble Truths** to develop the **3 types of corresponding wisdoms** of *suttamaya panna*, *cintamaya panna* and *bhavanamaya panna*. Develop the **initial wisdom** borne of the 1st and 2nd turnings through **constantly listening** to the **true dharma** and **constantly contemplating, reflecting** and **inquiring into them to straighten our views**. Then **cultivate sati sampajanna** (mindfulness and clear comprehension) in daily life **until one is ever mindful and constantly meditative**. When one can see **how the mind reacting, stirring** and **oscillating** between the **dualities** of **sensual desires and ill-will**, due to **wrong view** leading to **habitual tendencies**, then wisdom **will keep on arising**. Sati sampajanna will enable the mind **to see clearly** what is happening at every moment of sense experience. **Witnessing all the essential dharma arising and passing away according to the Buddha's teaching** will enable one to understanding the **3 universal characteristics** of nature clearly.
13. **Mindfulness** with **clear comprehension** will protect the mind **from going astray** and **being deceived** by the **phenomenal world of consciousness**. **Sense restraint** will be possible and **one cannot break the precepts** anymore because the mind **does not react through self-delusion anymore**. When that happens, **one's thoughts, speech and action** are in **accordance with Noble 8-fold Path** leading to one's ability to arise the **3 ways of right conduct**.
14. Right thought is very important. They are **all your virtuous thoughts** that include the four Brahma Viharas mind states and the **accompanying ennoblers of precepts** (ennobler of anger is love, ennobler of stealing is generosity, ennobler of lust is contentment, etc.) Such **virtuous thoughts** can only arise when one has developed **some level of wisdom**. As the cultivation progresses, one moves from the **contemplation of the essential dharma** to the contemplation on **how to cultivate the Noble 8-fold Path**. Wisdom will then keep on arising and the mind will become non-grasping later. When that happens, the egoic mind **borne of self-delusion** can be **rooted out**.
15. Our karmic nature follows us **immediately** life after life the moment we are born **but for us to inherit from our spiritual nature** one has **to connect to our true nature** first. Otherwise, it is **not possible to inherit** from the spiritual nature. Bro Teoh was able to do that in the year 1989 when he **connects to his true nature** to inherit all his past

cultivation. Bro Teoh also shared with us that **he is now able to share all these higher understandings** with us because the *kalyanamitta's consciousness has evolved* and *many of us can now understand such profound teachings*.

16. On Page 40 of the 75th lesson of the 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra transcript book, it was mentioned that all experiences acquired (by those who cultivate thought-based meditation) during retreats are **conditioned mind states** and they **won't bring about true transformation** because they are **using thought** to meditate. The dharma is akaliko (beyond thought and beyond time) so how can the thoughts realize reality or the dharma? Only Awareness or mindfulness which is beyond thought can realize the dharma.
17. Even the Jhanas are thought based (one-pointedness) energy field related cultivation that can cause cultivators to keep on chasing for better and better mind/psychic states. The Buddha taught us to **realize wisdom to liberate mind** which **has nothing** to do with **fantastic meditative mind states**. These are defilements of insight causing one to attach and cling leading to suffering. It is more important to cultivate correctly, the wisdom to awaken so that one is not deceived by our sense perceptions and the phenomenal world.
18. Back to Miss Lee's question (in the book), Bro Teoh mentioned that the question of 'shall we *stay with the silent mind?*' was a wrong question coming from the thought (non-understanding). The **silent mind** is the **meditative mind** that **can insight into phenomena to awaken and understand reality**. One has to cultivate until that silent awareness **becomes a part of our nature** so that **it is always with us (ever mindful)**. **We can then** use it to **cultivate, live life and awaken**. One **must not stay** with it because it is just **a nature, our true mind, a background awareness** for us to develop the **pure perception** and the **direct seeing to awaken**.
19. Most people are **so gullible** as to think, those objects of meditation, methods and techniques of meditation are the meditation itself. Instead they are **only skillful means** for one **to anchor and train their mind before moving** on to further **contemplation** and **cultivation**. They are only a means to an end. The **real meditation** is **heedfulness** as defined by dhammapada verse 23. **Heedfulness = Constantly meditative + ever mindful**.
20. Bro Teoh mentioned that, in January 2017, when he was asked to do a write up for his **new dharma website**, he came across the **Avijja Sutta** which he had never heard before. It was **strange indeed** because that Sutta appeared to him on his computer screen when he was googling for some **appropriate dharma** to be included in the write-up. When he clicks on this **Avijja sutta** and saw the **two cycles** (ignorant cycle and enlightenment cycle) stated in the sutta, he **immediately understood what they are** and he decided to put it on the website because they are **so beautiful and useful**. He came to realize **that was how he had cultivated** his meditation following exactly the **10 steps as stated** in the **enlightenment sequence of the Avijja sutta**. Bro Teoh belief many **could not understand** this Sutta because this sutta is **very profound**. Without a good understanding of this Sutta, one **cannot root out** or **break free** from ignorance.
21. Initially, one has to use words to explain the Dharma. But, words can be misleading if they are not properly understood. Just as some Thai tradition's books which use the translated word 'knower', **like stay with the 'knower'**. **Since it is anatta, there is no 'knower'**. The correct understanding should be stay with the 'awareness' nature. Hence, one needs some wisdom so as not to be so gullible by following blindly **without** investigating what has been taught.
22. We **cannot try to be aware**. The **trying is by the thought**. The moment we do that; we are using **another thought** to **look for mindfulness** or **to become mindful**. When thought is active, how can you be aware? **Instead we need to understand**, the **moment we are without thought**, the **awareness** is already there. So **just relax** and **don't do anything**, allow the **thought to slow down** and **cease** then the **awareness is manifested**. Then you will understand why the Buddha said, '**in the seeing**, initially there is **just the seeing consciousness**, the **pure perception** with **no one to see as yet**'.

23. One cannot be silent because **the wanting to know** is by the thought. This is obvious from the first two links of Paticca Samupada – **Avijja pacaya sankhara**. Bro Teoh emphasized the **importance of asking for clarification** if you are **not clear** about the **cultivation**. Otherwise, you will be practicing wrongly. **Whatever we do in the name of meditation, it is important** for us to do it **with understanding**.
24. Bro Teoh shared the dharma of an old monk, the late **广钦老和尚 (Guang Qing Lao He Shang)** from China. He was an **illiterate**, but he **was very wise**. His dharma verse on, **过去心不可得** (The mind of the past which is already gone is not a reality), **未来心不可得** (the mind of the future, has yet to come, is also not a reality), and **现在心也不可得** (the present moment mind is **also not a reality**). So, there is nothing that we can hold onto, not even the present moment. But Bro Teoh cautioned us to be careful. We need the **present moment mind in pure awareness to cultivate**. For the **ultimate realization**, to **transcend life**, one has to **transcend even the present moment** leading to the cessation of form and mind which is the **unconditioned**. The present moment may be the highest in life but it is **still within life**.
25. Bro Teoh mentioned comparisons between the Mahayana and Theravada approaches. The Mahayana teachings cover a wider scope of the **Buddha's teachings but lack a strong foundation of the essential dharma**. The Theravada approach has the **essentials laid out very clearly** but it **has not gone deep** into the **other aspects of the Buddha's teachings**. So when both can be integrated, the teaching becomes beautiful. This is what Bro Teoh has been doing in his classes. The Mahayana teaching is a spin off from the Theravada. If one has fixated ideas and views, one's understanding will be very limited.

(Above draft outline short notes was prepared by Puan Chee)