1. Bro Teoh continued his sharing from his transcript book, ‘the 75th lesson of the Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra.’ He explained again that the Mahayana chanting is to be done with awareness and understanding until the chanting develops the spiritual faculties of Saddha, Viriya, Sati, Samadhi and Panna.

2. Having a good daily religious routine covering morning and evening formal meditation, chanting, paying respect to triple gem and continuous mindfulness training throughout the day will help develop the 5 spiritual faculties. Bro Teoh mentioned the case of Sis Adeline who benefited a lot because of her faith and consistent effort leading to her ability to develop a very stable daily mindfulness to help her progress.

3. The mind has to be trained to be heedful in the midst of life following Dhammapada Verse 21 (Heedfulness is the path to the deathless, heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are as if dead.)

4. He stressed again the importance of training the mind. When one understands, just do the necessary and don’t try to know. It’s not about right or wrong but more of whether we understand what we are doing in the name of meditation. If the spiritual faculties are not there, train until they arise. Once they are there, there is no need to do anything. If they are not there, continue to train the mind until mind enters sati.

5. At every moment of sense experience, when one is in sati, there is clarity, sensitivity and understanding. Then, develop clear comprehension (sampajanna) to avoid deviation during cultivation leading to wrong mindfulness.

6. Who wants to know? It is the thought, the ego which manifests without you knowing it. So it is about whether one understands what one is doing in the name of meditation.

7. Instead of waiting for the teacher to praise us, understand what we are doing. The real meditation is not only the formal practice but it includes the cultivation of the daily mindfulness while in the midst of life. It is therefore necessary that we have a good daily religious routine and be mindful throughout the day. Pay respect to Triple Gem mindfully, doing daily chores mindfully, and maintain mindfulness of all actions and movements in the present moment. As there is a tendency for us to use the brain to think a lot, it is advisable to bring attention to the heart area and develop inner awareness from there. Whenever we lapse into heedlessness, bring attention back to the heart area and be aware of the outside from this area of inner awareness.

8. Meditation is a full time job. But we do not need to retire from any job to develop the meditation. If we attend retreats because of mind having problems, this will not be effective if we attend a retreat just to feel good, more peaceful and calm, only to lose the calmness when our minds get agitated again while in the midst of life. The real meditation is cultivating the initial wisdom leading to sati sampajanna. Cultivation must be supported by wisdom, mindfulness and clear comprehension to enable one to awaken to the truth.

9. The three bodies of the Buddha are: – the functional body (nirmanakaya) which performs the function of the Buddha, the spiritual body (sambogayakaya, where all the virtue, wisdom and understanding the Buddha had perfected in the past is stored) and finally the Dharma body (dharmakaya) which enables the Buddha to share the dharma with the world.
10. His functional body (even though dependent-originating) will enable the Buddha to perform his function as a Buddha to teach the dhamma to the world but it is not him, for it goes the way of nature. It is subjected to old age, sickness and death.

11. The Buddha inherited his spiritual understanding and perfections through the Sambogayakaya. Hence, when the Buddha finally attained Buddhahood, He uttered The Paean of Joy (Dhammapada Verses 153, 154).

**PAEAN OF JOY**

*Through many a birth I wandered in this samsāra (endless cycle of births and deaths),*

*Seeking but not finding, the builder of this house. Sorrowful is repeated birth.*

*O house builder! You are seen. You shall build no house again All your rafters are broken.*

*Your ridge-pole shattered. My mind has attained the unconditioned. Achieved is the end of craving.*

12. Bro Teoh explained the difference between beings who are reborn with and without the Bodhisattva vows. For the former, it is via their karma and their Bodhisattva vows that conditioned their rebirth via a pure mind (without avijja) borne of love and compassion for the limitless living beings which they vowed to take across. For the latter (non-Bodhisattva), it is via normal karma that conditions their rebirth with avijja.

13. Not everyone is able to inherit their spiritual nature’s perfections unless they can connect to their true nature due to their Bodhisattva vows taken from earlier lives. For Bro Teoh’s case, he was able to inherit his past cultivations from his spiritual nature because of his past cultivation and vows. His unique past cultivation and understanding, enable him to have the conditions to meet the right teachers, guides and great being’s nature to connect to his true nature early. Not long after that, his mundane mind collapsed and his nature shine forth and became very different. He also mentioned that we will not be able to comprehend all this until later.

14. Bro Teoh explained what he meant by ‘meditation is a full-time job’. It doesn’t mean, we have to retire from our job. Because mindfulness can be develop in all postures while working and living life, regardless of whether we are working or retired. It only involves the understanding of the domain of meditation. We do what we have to do via following the 10 steps as listed in the enlightenment sequence of the avijja sutta. One need to attend dharma classes, cultivate and heed the advice of the Buddha. Live a life following the dharma way. The dharma way is the righteous way. To take care of karma via keeping precepts and to cultivate all virtues and blessings.

15. Most people only come to listen to the dharma when they face problems. But once their problems are resolved, they forget what they should do. They have not understood the real meaning of the Four Noble Truth. Hence, suffering will arise again and again when the conditions are there.

16. Cultivation can be equated to learning cooking. If one only reads the recipe but never tries it out, then it is just book knowledge. The same applies to understanding the dharma. As long as one does not know how to apply what has been learnt, it will only be knowledge. Understanding is not rigid. There is no short cut to cultivation. The dharma learnt has to be put into practice, leading to awakening for it to be useful.

17. The swimming analogy is very good. Initially, we use a float to keep us afloat. For meditation, we use a skilful means such as anapanasati or any object of meditation to anchor the mind. Knowing that our body’s natural state is buoyancy (as it is lighter than water), then we can let go of the float to swim. We don’t have to learn to float. Similarly, when we understand that, without thought (during meditation), one is already aware. So there is no
need to hold onto the skilful means or learn how to be aware to meditate anymore. Hence, just as swimming is to be develop with understanding, meditation uses the same principle.

18. When the mind is quiet and mindful in the midst of life, we can see clearly how we are caught up in the vicious cycle of seeking, wanting to know, too eager to progress, etc. which arises more craving in the mind. With this understanding, we only need to cultivate sincerely and diligently for the appropriate conditions to unfold. Once the mind enters sati, we can see the subtle defilements clearly and how they condition us to think, speak and react to sense experience.

19. For Bro Teoh when his mundane mind collapsed, the 3 universal characteristics were so apparent to him every moment, every instant. However, without the direct seeing borne of a silent mind, it is very difficult for us to understand this truth. It is important to train our mind until it enters sati while in the formal practice. Otherwise, while in the midst of life, you don’t stand a chance to have such mind state because the six sense doors are fully engaged while living life.

20. Initial wisdom is very important. As mentioned in the Avijja Sutta: associating with dharma friends, listening and contemplating the dharma (to develop the first and second turning wisdom), faith in the Triple Gem, yoniso manasikara, daily mindfulness with clear comprehension, sense restraint, the 3 ways of right conduct and cultivating 4 foundations of mindfulness are important steps leading to the arising of the 7 factors of enlightenment. As they keep on arising, this will lead to the enlightenment in the here and the now.

21. Bro Teoh kept reminding fellow Kalyanamittas to constantly listen to the true dharma again and again and cultivate following the 10 steps as listed in the Avijja Sutta. To write it down and practice seriously which is what most of us lack. Without the initial wisdom our mind cannot enters sati so how can the daily mindfulness be developed? If there is this understanding, one will have the urgency to do all these during this sasana, one will be determined to cultivate sincerely and seriously from now onwards.

(Above draft short notes was prepared by Puan Chee)