1. Your original state of mind (without the thought) is your true nature. This is your meditative mind. With this understanding, to meditate is very easy, just Relax, aware, and silent (or let things be). When you are silent within, you can see how thoughts actually arise, due to conditions and it is dependent originating. There is no ‘thinker’ behind the thought, hence it is non-self (anatta). Thought is respond to memory. If your daily mindfulness and silent mind is very stable, you can also see the birth and formation of thought and this thought (namarupa) is the 2nd aspect of the 5 aggregate of form and mind. Initially it is just the pure vinnanam (pure consciousness) before the content of consciousness goes in to form the thought (namarupa).

2. How does thought arise? Why is thought limited? You are initially the spacious awareness without a center. When you shrink your spacious awareness into a small space to perceive something, thought becomes limited. Initially this is just pure awareness before the content of consciousness goes in. That is ‘in the seeing, there is only seeing consciousness’ no one to see as yet. But with your views, opinions and mental conditioning, the wrong content of consciousness are inputted through perception and memory, and this cause the pure awareness/pure consciousness to become an egoic thought. This happens very fast (when you lack a stable daily mindfulness and the initial wisdom or yoniso manasikara) borne of the 1st and 2nd turning wisdom. Reason why there is grasping to the 5 aggregates of form and mind due to ignorance, leading to dukkha.

3. In the 12 links (Paticca samuppada) or Dependent Origination teaching the Buddha said, ‘avijja paccaya sankhara; sankhara paccaya vinnanam; vinnana paccaya nama rupam; .......’. That is ‘Dependent on ignorance (ignorant of truth), mental activities or thinking arise. When thinking arise, mind makes contact with brain, then just like the physics experiment, upon contact the light bulb lights up. The lighting up is vinnanam i.e. the pure ‘thought’ consciousness before the input of its content. In Satipathana sutta, Buddha used the term citta, meaning the pure vinnanam with its content. Thus the Buddha instructed the monks as follows: when the content of consciousness has delusion or lust (greed) or hatred, you must be aware.

4. To meditate is not to create more thoughts. Instead you need sati (the silent mind) to see the essential dharma, to know who you are and how you function as a human being, and to know clearly the Paticca samuppada (the Law of Dependent Origination) links and teaching clearly.

5. The following Mahayana Dharma saying by Master Bo Yuen Chang Lau of WPCS are very important:
   - 心静 (xin jing) - Still or silent mind, the meditative mind;
   - 无念是真心 (wu nian shi zhen xin) – without thought that is the true mind;
   - 动念即无明 (dong nian ji wu ming) – stirring of the thought is delusion.
6. When you think a lot, it means there is ignorance. You lack wisdom and you are heedless. (Instead the enlightened ones only think when they need to, or else they are most of the time silent within).

7. For your meditative mind to arise, you need to have the initial wisdom, the 5 spiritual faculties, and the daily mindfulness developed. The reason being, our mind can only do one thing at a time; i.e. it is either aware (within the moment) borne of wisdom or it is loss in thought (preoccupied with the thinking due to avijja or ignorant). When it is aware it is with the true mind (without thought). Whereas when you are loss in thoughts, it is with the mundane mind heedlessly thinking and proliferating.

8. For those who can’t have the meditative mind developed, they cannot meditate. Reason why they need an object of meditation or a skillful means to anchor and train the mind. Most of them focus their mind to do Samatha meditation via the 40 objects of meditation so that their mind is not heedless (think a lot) and restless. One can only be mindful when the 5 spiritual faculties are there, otherwise the mental hindrances will be there to hinder their mind from entering the meditative state of inner peace and inner awareness. The object of meditation is only their initial skillful means to help suppress their obsessive thoughts. This is suppression via a conditioned state of focusing (concentration)! Not borne of wisdom. Reason why their defilements borne of ignorant cannot be rooted out because they are all suppressed by the concentration or energy field.

9. The 5 spiritual faculties make one calm, composed and ever mindful and it can enable one to understand spiritual teachings easily. The 5 spiritual faculties are:

   a) Faith/Saddha – your faith deepens by knowing clearly who the Buddha is? He is not only enlightened but fully enlightened. He is perfect in wisdom and virtue, he understands life completely and his rather unique and beautiful teaching can liberate the mind of living beings from all suffering.

   b) Spiritual zeal/Viriya – the spiritual tenacity to cultivate (borne of seeing the importance of such cultivation), to make you awake. You need a good daily religious routine to train your mind to be ever mindful in midst of life. When you do the formal meditation, it is to train your mind enter sati and to realize passaddhi.

   c) Sati/mindfulness – awareness (without thought), before the input of the content of consciousness. When you are in sati there is no thought hence there is no negativity of mind states.

   d) Samadhi - mind that is collected and unwavering. (because of Samadhi, when you see something, your mundane mind does not stir. Then you can see things as they are, and you will not stir your mind to act according to memory (which is not acting at all) through inputting the content of consciousness according to your memory’s accumulated views, opinions and mental conditioning which leads to evil roots and wrong thoughts.

   e) Wisdom/panna – will arise when I can see things as they are with Samadhi leading to the last enlightenment factor of upakkha (equanimity borne of wisdom).

10. Thus it is important to train your mind to be ever mindful (without thought) by cultivating the 5 spiritual faculties and the daily mindfulness. You need this because once you enter life, your 6 sense doors are fully engaged so if you cannot be in this meditative state when you are in the formal meditation then it will be near to impossible for you to be mindful while you are fully engaged in life.
11. It is important to be mindful of your 6 internal and 6 external sense bases to understand how you function as a human being, because you interact with the world through your sense bases. When you are aware of all these, you will know how you become lustful, fearful, emotional, angry etc. You are able to see them all in your meditation - all the essential dharma as taught by the Buddha: the 5 spiritual faculties, 5 mental hindrances, 5 aggregates of form and mind, 4 noble truths, 7 factors of enlightenment, 10 steps of the avijja sutta, 3 turning of the 4 Noble truth wisdom, etc.

12. The Dharma is akaliko (beyond time and beyond thought) i.e. timeless. Thus you cannot use thought to meditate to realize the dharma which is beyond thought. You need sati to realize this true dharma.

13. Thought is matter, thought is trapped energy (E=mc2). Thought can see form; form cannot see thought. Thus thought is of higher intelligence than form. From 0 comes 1 (the 1st thought of ignorant) then from 1 comes infinity. When we meditate, awareness can see thought but thought cannot see awareness. Thus awareness has higher intelligence. Thought arises from your true nature. From this oneness nature, all things come about.

14. When you walk this path of dharma, you develop wisdom leading to virtues, naturally. Without wisdom, there is no genuine virtues. True Virtues must be accompanied with wisdom otherwise it is virtue according to oneself.

15. Human beings have two minds: the mundane mind and the supra mundane mind. Supra mundane mind will realize that the 5 aggregates are empty (empty nature of existence) thus non-self and impermanent.

16. In our daily cultivation, we start from understanding the mundane mind via comprehending Dhammapada verses 1 and 2. According to the Buddha, Verse 1: 'Mind is the forerunner of all things; when mind arises, all things arises. If you act, speak and think with the unwholesome or evil mind that has the 3 evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion, then suffering will follow you as the wheels that follow the hoof print of the ox that draws the cart. Whereas Verse 2: if you speak, act and think with a pure mind (free of the 3 evil roots), happiness will follow you like a shadow that never leaves you. Thus you need to train the mundane mind to be heedful.

17. Your life, you hold the key to your own life’s destiny. To be happy or unhappy is entirely your choice. So choose to be happy, choose to develop wholesomeness, to train your mind to be heedful and constantly meditative always via following the advice of the Buddha to Do good, avoid all evil and purify the mind.

18. But when it comes to meditation, we start with understanding the true mind. Meditate to realize and connect to our true nature. Wisdom that arise via the direct seeing is connected to your 5 aggregate of form and mind and thus the form and mind (or human being) is enlightened, but it is not you because the 5 aggregate of form and mind is not a permanent unchanging entity. As this 5 aggregate is no longer deluded, thus there is no more suffering. This is how awakening happens.

19. If you plant the seed of wholesomeness, you will reap the fruit of goodness. On the other hand, evil begets evil. Thus it is important to keep the minimum 5 precepts. This will enable you to avoid all the major evils. If you violate these precepts, karmic fruition will surely hit back. Out of love and compassion for human beings, Buddha taught the 5 precepts. Then cultivate wholesomeness, and develop mindfulness and wisdom to purify mind to have the good life. To live the 3rd phase of dharma – Pativedha dharma (life of an enlightened being).
20. In avijja sutta, **sense restraint** is vital. With **sense restraint** you can’t break your **precepts**. This comes about after **having listening** to the **true dharma** and then **investigated** (via constant reflection, contemplation and inquiry) into them to develop the **faith** and the initial **wisdom** (yonisomanasikara) borne of 1st and 2nd **turning wisdom**. Real meditation only begins when sati sampajanna (mindfulness and clear comprehension) has stabilized. With this, one can keep to **precepts naturally**, as one knows the consequence from not doing so.

21. With **wisdom**, thought may arise but **no more proliferation** due to **wrong view** and **self-delusion**. You are aware and mindful at the moment of sense experience **most of the time** and this yonisomanasikara will prompt and guide you, on **how to act according to wisdom**, following **Noble 8-fold path**. When you perceive something, wisdom sees it just ‘as it is’. Suchness.

22. Qi Xin Dong Nian” (起心动念) – the arising of mind, creates thinking hence stirring of the mind comes to be! Or in Theravāda term it is “avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra” – “Ignorance conditions activities of mind” (the first two links of the paṭicca-samuppāda)

23. Originally **before the stirring**, the **true mind** is already in the **meditative state** of inner peace, silence and **still awareness within**. So the **stirring of the mundane mind comes about** only when we do not have the **wisdom** and **understanding** of this **fundamental principle**. Through our **own ignorance**, we cause our mundane mind to arise via our **reactions** to sense experiences at the moment of sense experience. **Train the mind** to have the **silent inner awareness and clarity to see all these clearly** then there is **no more delusion** and we can just “let things be” then no more suffering or problem and **tranquility will return** by **not trying to do anything** via the **thought to suppress or control**. I.e. just **be patient** to maintain the ‘silent mind’ with **clear inner awareness** within, to let everything **return to its original state before its stirring**. Always remember; when there is no delusion or ignorance there is no stirring of the mind because **“only wisdom frees the mind”**. i.e. the moment you have wisdom, your mind will not stir and you are free, so **no need to do anything after that** because **things are just the way they are! – Suchness or Tathatā.**

(The draft for this short notes were prepared by Sister Chong Phey Yuen.)