

August 2005

Second Issue



Monthly News letter of The Triple Gem Of The North

Weekly Meditation

Monday Night

Meditation;

7.00 Pm to 8.30 PM

Unitarian Universality Fellowship

937 Charles Ave.,

Mankato, MN 56001

Call Tricia@ 507 524 3245

Friday Night

6.00 Pm to 7.30 PM

Meditation;

6.00 Pm to 7.30 pm

Sutra Studies;

7.30 Pm to 8.00 Pm

Heartwood Mindfulness
Center

3706 E 34th St,

Minneapolis

Call Ray@ 6127603996

Saturday Morning

Meditation;

10 pm to 12 noon

Chanhassen Library

771 Kerber Steet

Chanhassen, MN

Call Rich@ 9522702164

When Bhante Sathi woke up this morning, perhaps on a couch, or in a guest room, he was among his noble friends. These kind folks generously provide their shelter and hospitality for a night, or a few days at a time, so Sathi can continue his work. Bhante Sathi is a monk on a mission, and without a permanent home. Arriving in Minnesota in 2003, Bhante Sathi established Triple Gem of the North, a nonprofit organization dedicated to spreading the wisdom of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Since then, Triple Gem has grown steadily, gathering together local Buddhists, and extending communities throughout the state. In the spirit of service, the Triple Gem organization was founded with a goal in mind: We would like to establish a retreat center in



Retreats offer participants the opportunity to reconnect with their lives through serenity and self-discovery. The word "retreat" signifies a withdrawal. Retreats offer participants time to withdraw from secular things in order to become more balanced, to leave the outer world to find the inner, to quiet the mind in order to experience healing. Retreats are vital because of the benefit received from the silence, following spiritual exercises, and meditating.

Mediators often travel to retreat centers in the forest to practice, renouncing the rigors of urban life, returning to nature and its pure ways. Within these forest temples, you will find a spiritual space where noble friends gather, a place to hold classes and perform extended training sessions in peace. While we

are still on the path towards finding such a place, Bhante Sathi continues to serve and support our spiritual community. In this way, we at Triple Gem are working together to lay the groundwork for a spiritual place to better serve needs of our community. People have described Bhante Sathi temporary retreats as bringing them closer to more awareness of compassion toward others, more connected with their spirituality, and living more authentically with themselves and with others.

Working in the modern world, by phone and internet, Bhante Sathi travels throughout Minnesota, teaching classes and sponsoring retreats. We hope to establish a central retreat center, so he can more easily host these activities, and guide others in the ways of Buddhism. Also, so Bhante Sathi can have a home, and continue his monastic life of meditation and service. You are invited to help build and share Bhante Sathi's vision for a retreat.

—Lee Watson—

Buddhism Makes Sense.....

I began practicing Buddhism gradually because logically it made sense. I remember thinking that, even if a spiritual person could eliminate personal suffering, he or she would still suffer, because others suffer. This thought reminded me of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, regarding not being free until all are free. This awareness helped me realize that true happiness would only come when all would be happy.

As I began my practice of meditation, I found that with "letting go" came a natural sense of greater connectedness and compassion. I prayed for all beings to be happy and free from suffering. But then I pondered that, perhaps, some people did not want to be prayed for. As therapists we understand the importance of personal boundaries, and I wondered if, for some, prayers were not welcome. Some people could view prayers as judgments or extensions of pity. For some suffering could be serving a purpose, should I always pray for its cessation?

In contemplating this, I thought that both praying and not praying could apply, but how could I not pray for the happiness and end of suffering for all beings? Was this not the logic of Buddhism that attracted me so? As Buddhists we meditate and pray and listen. So I sat and trusted and let go. I and stayed in the moment and saw that prayers of petition are only one type of prayer. Emptying the mind in meditative prayer is emptying the mind of all requests and judgment. Experiencing higher consciousness brings a deep sense that we are connected in an egoless state of assurance, happiness and reverence beyond petitions or boundaries.

Next, I would like to discuss a technique I use in therapy developed by Kelly Avants at Yale © on developing a greater spiritual self-schema. It is called the 3-S Program. The program shows how habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, reacting, and behaving characterize how we experience and express our "self" in daily life. These patterns can be like a fast, convenient, and readily accessed high-speed, super-highway, but do not lead to happiness. We may mistakenly believe that this super-highway of interconnected thoughts, feelings, and behaviors reflects our "true nature" believing this is me; this is mine; this is my Self. In Buddhism we ask if this is true.

It is so easy to lose sight of who we really are with automatic, mindless thoughts that crave for and cling to what we desire and do not have, and to thoughts of aversion towards what we have and do not desire. If we are to examine this cognitive super-highway more closely we will see that it leads only to further dissatisfaction. Yet, even with this insight, it is extremely difficult to exit. Try to ask, "What personal super-highway am I on? Does it lead to the experience and expression of my "true" nature? Does it cause or relieve "suffering" (i.e., a general feeling of dissatisfaction, or emotional distress, or any physical, emotional, or spiritual harm to self or others)?"

It is important to review ways that will bring awareness of the habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, reacting, and behaving (your habitual self-schemas) that have been active. Try to monitor what activates the habitual self-schemas as they occur in your daily life. You will also determine which of your habitual self-schemas is most incompatible with your goals for a personal Spiritual path. If you persevere and continue working on understanding your thoughts and feelings, the benefits of these initial steps will become clear. Make a commitment to yourself to make this part of your daily consciousness. "Walking the spiritual path is a very subtle process; it is not something to jump into naively. There are numerous sidetracks, which lead to a distorted, ego-centered version of spirituality; we can deceive ourselves into thinking we are developing spiritually when instead we are strengthening our egocentricity through spiritual techniques."

(From "365 Buddha: Daily Meditations," edited by Jeff Schmidt)

— Dr Yael Rubin —

Anger... — A Article By Bhante Sathi's speech at Monday Night Class —

Have you ever experience anger? Do you like anger? If you're like most people, the answer would be "No." We especially don't like anger directed towards ourselves. But, when we get angry amazingly it becomes a very reasonable anger. Then we say, "Yes I got angry because of you" or "I got angry because of this." We are justifying our anger. What does that mean? Who controls our anger? Who gave a chance to others to control us, to arise various emotions, and as a result, anger. Let's think about this.

We all have experienced anger whether we like it or not. When someone doesn't do what we expect them to do, unpleasant feelings arise within us. Our first reactions are to feel uncomfortable and disagree. Then we tend to fight against those feelings. We want others to change their way because it makes us unhappy. If we can't control the situation our reactions will depend on the type of connection we have with that particular person. If it is not a strong relationship the first thing we do is to move away. But if we cannot leave because of a strong relationship, we fight against these situations. Again, feeling uncomfortable arouses anger. At this point anger is a simple weapon that we use to protect ourselves. We think anger is powerful and we can fulfill our desire by getting angry.

In a situation where anger is towards you, that energy also can cause anger within you. As an example, if somebody is coming at you armed with a weapon, to get energy to face that person you think you need another weapon; a powerful weapon which you can defeat the enemy. First you get the weapon to protect yourself. To protect yourself, you want to make them scared. It is the same way that we get angry. If someone is coming at us with anger we also answer that with anger. We want to respond with a more powerful weapon. Then the other side does the same thing. When it goes above your limit you can no longer control your anger and you do whatever you feel like doing. What happens here is that you begin to create mental stories about the situation. Because of your feelings of discomfort, these stories manifest themselves into your own projected reality and now you are just reacting to the situation with a misguided.

The ordinary way of thinking is that we have to face anger-to-anger, weapon-to-weapon, and war-to-war. That is the nature of the typical human being. But that is not reality. If you really start to practice loving kindness against anger, you will realize that there is nothing to fight against. Think about it this way: we don't use fire to burn out a fire. We use water. As Jesus asked, "If anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn your left cheek." That is a really good lesson in handling anger because if you turn the other cheek, the person will not feel comfortable to hit again. Also, it helps them to reduce their anger right away. We fight against someone because we want to show we are more powerful than him or her. If we think they are not harmful then we are not comfortable to fight against them. By showing anger against anger, we are feeding their anger.

Anger starts by disagreeing with something until gradually

that "something" becomes a rejection and turns into hatred. We can notice this because of all the physical and mental

changes we go through when we are angry and experience hatred. According to Buddha's teachings, anger is processed and aroused in three ways. First, anger changes our perceptions and it arise emotions. Secondly, it changes you physically as some of the muscles in the body tense, blood pressure rises, our blood becomes warmer, hormone levels vary, and much more. Thirdly, are the uncontrolled words that come through the mouth. If we observe these changes within us when we get angry, we could see this is harmful to you even before you harm someone else with your anger. We really become weaker by getting angry. By the time we have allowed our anger to unleash itself upon us, any teaching learned to retard anger is neither powerful nor influential. Therefore, it is best to not allow anger to manifest from the beginning.

Pay attention to this well because this is a subject common and beneficial to all of us. Poor perceptions can make us a weak person. By having emotions we are becoming powerless and unhappy. However, by practicing mindfulness it helps us to have perceptions without emotions and, as a result, we are very much in control. We know what is happening and what we need to do. Also, we find the best answer or solution to a problem.

Sometimes we can show anger without really being angry. Take the fire example. This time, instead of using water to put out the fire, we actually use fire to control the existing fire. Here we are in a state of mind where we know that fire against fire is the best solution. Our use of fire isn't based on ignorance or hatred. Instead, it is based on intelligence. Buddha explained this very same concept to a wise person once. The example that Buddha provided was when there is a forest fire spreading very fast with the wind, the wise will set fire to a strip that surrounds his land to save his property as fire can not spread further through burned fields.

One who does this knows about the power of fire and how to use the power. He or she is aware of what they are doing. One who uses anger as a similar way does the same. It is a way of "acting" angry without the physical and mental downfalls of when one is really angry. He or she knows what they are speaking about and, as a result, their words are more powerful and effective. We must recognize the cause of the fire. By recognizing it, we can change the cause to put out the fire. When we stop contributing to the cause, we can stop the fire. Similarly when we stop contributing to anger, we can stop anger. Disagreements and unpleasant feelings are the main contributors of arising anger within us. The wise one will use mindfulness to realize these pleasant and unpleasant feelings. This realization will prevent anger from arousing. It helps us to realize the reality and to find a solution, a perfect solution. We could never find a perfect solution by engaging with our emotions, because emotions contribute to arising anger within, rather than realizing the causes that brought about the original anger.

Voice Of Wisdom

Triple Gem Of The North**PO Box 323****St Peter, MN 56082****Email: info@triplegem.org****Phone: 612-227-8188****Fax: 952-314-4863****Web: www.triplegem.org****Up Coming events;**September 9th Friday 7.00 pm -8.30 pm

Public Talk by Bhante Punnaji

"Ariya magga bavana" (The Sublime Way)September 10th Saturday, 5.30 Am- 6.00 Pm

One Day Meditation Retreat

Space is available to stay overnight at the temple on September 9th, Limited space. Register early through the website or call Amy at (507) 351 4454, Bhante Sathi at (612) 227 8188

Venerable Punnaji is a meditation master from Sri Lanka. He was been in North America for more than 30 years. He has practiced meditation in the forest hermitage in Sri Lanka. Before he came to North America, he did research to discover the original teaching of the Buddha. His method of meditation is based on his research. He is educated in modern science, western philosophy and psychology. Also he is a well-known teacher in the United States, Canada and United Kingdom.

**Lesson of the Water Vase**

Hyakujo, a great Zen master wished to send a monk to open a new monastery. He told his pupils that whoever answered a question most ably would be appointed as the master of the new monastery.

He placed a water vase on the ground, and asked his pupils: **"Who can say what this is without calling its name?"**

The most senior monk of that monastery said: **"No one can call it a wooden shoe."**

Isan, the monk who cooks, tipped over the vase with his foot and went out.

Hyakujo smiled and said: "The senior monk loses." And Isan became the master of the new monastery.

"Just as treasures are uncovered from the earth, so virtue appears from good deeds, and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind. To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue."

- Buddha -