

October 2005

Fourth Issue



# Insight

Voice Of Wisdom

## Monthly News letter of *The Triple Gem Of The North*

### Weekly Meditation

### Buddhism in the West

Monday Evening

7.00 PM to 8.30 PM

At

Unitarian Universality Fellowship

937 Charles Ave.,

Mankato, MN 56001

Call Tricia@ 507-524 -3245

Friday Evening

6.00 PM to 7.30 PM

Sutra Studies

7.30 PM to 8.00 PM

At

Heartwood Mindfulness  
Center

3706 E 34th St,

Minneapolis

Call Ray@ 612-760-3996

Saturday Morning

8.30 AM to 10.00 AM

At

Chanhassen Recreation  
Center

Chanhassen, MN

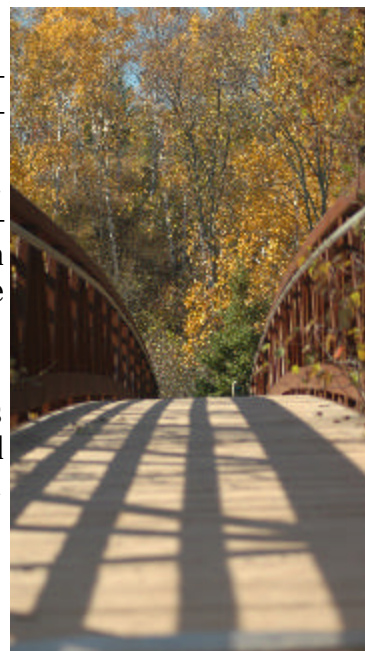
Call Rich@ 952-270-2164

The awakened one emerged from Indian society. Because of this, some of us think it is part of Eastern culture, so we think it is subject to the East. Some of us think his teachings are too old; it is not for today. We have exchanged caves for mansions; we have discovered flight and invented rockets. We have high power cars instead of carts. But still we experience emotions such as love and hatred, anger and peace, sorrow and joy.

This has taken us to the question today. Is this only subject to Easterners? We ask this of a well known Buddhist monk who was born in the West but went to the East and spent more than half of his life. We ask this question of Bhikku Bodhi. Is Buddhism applicable to Western culture?

#### His answer is:

Buddhism is not a matter of a particular culture, but of the truth. We should actually distinguish between "Buddhism" and the Dhamma. Buddhism is a cultural, historical, and social phenomenon; thus we can speak about Sri Lankan Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, Thai Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism. Or we can speak about Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana Buddhism, etc. But Dhamma/Dharma is not about a culture, or about social phenomena, or about history, but about the truth. At the heart of the Dhamma is the truth about suffering and happiness. All human beings want to avoid suffering and to find true happiness. This is a common aim of human beings, no matter what part of the world they might come from, no matter what their cultural background might be, no matter what type of society they might come from. To find freedom from suffering and attain true happiness we have to understand the causes of suffering and the causes that lead to true happiness. The Dhamma is about the causes of suffering and the means to find true happiness. The Buddha's purpose was not to establish a particular religion called "Buddhism," but to teach human beings the Dhamma, the truth about suffering and happiness, the path to true happiness. These truths are the same for all human beings. The path of Dhamma consists in observing moral discipline, purifying the mind of its defilements, and realizing the truth with wisdom. These principles of practice are the same for all human beings, no matter what their social or cultural background might be. We follow these principles, not because we want to follow an Asian religion rather than a Western religion, but because we understand that the Buddha's teaching, the Dhamma, teaches these principles more clearly, more precisely, with greater rigor, than any other philosophy or religion.



## ***Man To Superman .....***

### ***Evolution of Civilized Man***

The uncivilized man is closer to the apes in that he, like the ape, is for the most part passively reacting to the environment, unable to control his impulses. His life is full of anxiety. He has to find food or he will die of starvation. In going out to find food, he is in danger of becoming the food of another animal. He has to risk his life in order to find food for survival. In the midst of this danger, he also begins to seek pleasure, and in doing so, he often risks his life too in competition with others. Uncivilized man does not have satisfactory shelter or clothing. He does not have proper medicine when sick. He does not have much security and comfort in life. As a result, uncivilized man experiences a relatively greater amount of anxiety than civilized man.



Uncivilized man, because he is not in full control of his natural impulses, is self centered and cannot properly care for others. He is also competitive and alienated and has to satisfy and defend himself, alone, as an individual, even by hurting others. He cannot therefore make much progress in the control of his environment, until he learns to join others, and share and care and help one another in society.

When the mind is broadened this way in the process of civilization, man becomes less and less individualistic and more and more co-operative. He becomes more capable of team work. Through cooperative team work, in production and exchange and the discovery of better ways of governing, and organizing, society, civilized man is thus able to reduce the anxiety of life. It should be noted that this anxiety reduction became the primary goal of man, and it was achieved through socialization and self-discipline in civilized man. Self-discipline is both positive and negative. It is to perform what is socially constructive and to avoid what is socially destructive. This social attitude is the characteristic of civilized man. It is individuals that make a society not vice versa. Civilized man is socialized man. Civilized society is his product.

### ***Evolution of Superman***

Although civilized man, through better organization, work and technology, is able to reduce anxiety and make life more comfortable, he is not able to eliminate anxiety from his life entirely. Civilized man, in the process of becoming socialized and disciplined, learns to suppress his natural self-centered urges and impulses. These suppressed impulses begin to accumulate tension, which seeks release in actions. Because this tension is not allowed to be released in actions that are anti social, they tend to find release in perverted form, or this tension remains in the form of anxiety.

This is why civilized-society is plagued with neurosis, anxiety, problematic stress and other psychological problems and psychosomatic disease. Civilized man, though he is comfortable physically, is still uncomfortable within. Therefore he seeks inner peace and tranquility. He turns to techniques of stress management, the use of tranquillizer drugs, progressive relaxation, hypnosis, biofeedback and other methods of finding inner peace. He also turns to modern psychotherapy as well as ancient religious techniques of meditation and mysticism.

The important thing about this new turn that civilized man has taken is the focus on inner peace and tranquility. This new turn of civilized man is in the direction of the next stage in the evolution of man. It is the evolution of civilized man to the level of super man.

The more natural and more systematic method of evolution of civilized man to superman, however, is achieved through the practice of religion. By religion, I do not mean mere belief and ritualistic practice. That is what organized religion usually is. I am speaking of natural religion, which is the gradual evolution of consciousness; beginning with the appreciation of what is good and true. This appreciation elevates the human mind above the mere concern with the satisfaction of basic physical needs.

**(Continued with next issue)**

— ***Bhante Punnaji*** —

## ***Why Do We Believe ...***

Oh! Kalamans, go by report, nor by tradition, nor by certainty, nor by authority of scripture, nor by reasoning, nor by logic, nor by inference from observation, nor by acceptance of mystical visions, nor by probability, nor by faith in a holy teacher. When you know for yourselves these experiences are unwholesome, these experiences are corrupt, these experiences are denounced by intelligent people, these experiences when cultivated and clung to, develop into detriment and pain, then should you abandon them.

"What do you think, Kalamans, when lust arises in a person, when hate arises in a person, when confusion arises in a person, is it for his profit or for his loss?"

"For his loss."

"Kalamans, the lustful individual overcome by lust, the hateful individual overcome by hate, the confused individual overcome by confusion, with an emotionally excited mind destroys life, takes what is not given, has extra-marital affairs, speaks what is false, and induces others to do the same. This would be for his detriment and pain for a long time."

"Yes"

"What do you think, Kalamans, are these experiences wholesome or unwholesome?"

"Unwholesome"

"Are they corrupt or not?"

"Corrupt"

"Are they denounced or extolled by intelligent people?"

"Denounced by intelligent people"

"When cultivated and clung to, do these experiences develop into detriment and pain, or could it be otherwise?"



"They develop into detriment and pain when cultivated and clung to: that is how it seems to us."

"Kalamans, the Extraordinary Hearer, free from lust, free from hate, free from confusion, intelligent and aware, abides covering the first quarter with a heart full of selfless love, compassion, joy and equanimity, and so does he the second, the third, and the fourth quarters; then above, below and in between, everywhere, in every way. The entire boundless cosmos he abides covering with a heart full of selfless love, compassion, joy and equanimity, broadened, and expanded, free from limitations, without enmity, without hatred."

"Kalamans, the Extraordinary Hearer, who abides in this way with a heart free from enmity, with a heart free of hatred, with a heart free of defilements, with a pure heart, by him is obtained here and now four satisfactions."

"Thinking, 'If there is a life after death, and if there are pleasant and unpleasant consequences of deeds, I should after death be heaven-bound,= he obtains the first satisfaction.

"Thinking, 'If, on the other hand, there is no life after death, and there are no pleasant and unpleasant consequences of deeds, in that case, I maintain myself happily here and now, free from enmity, free from hatred, and free from trouble,' he obtains the second satisfaction."

"Thinking, 'If evil is done by the free choice of the doer, I do not think evil towards anyone. If I do not do any evil, how can I suffer in consequence,' he obtains the third satisfaction."

"Thinking, 'If evil is not done by the free choice of the doer, then I am pure in two ways (by not being responsible for my actions and by not doing any evil),' he obtains the fourth satisfaction."

***- Buddha, Kalama Sutta -***

## Voice Of Wisdom

### Isn't It Beautiful ....

A priest was in charge of the garden within a famous Zen temple. He had been given the job because he loved the flowers, shrubs, and trees. Next to the temple there was another, smaller temple where there lived a very old Zen master. One day, when the priest was expecting some special guests, he took extra care in tending to the garden. He pulled the weeds, trimmed the shrubs, combed the moss, and spent a long time meticulously raking up and carefully arranging all the dry autumn leaves. As he worked, the old master watched him with interest from across the wall that separated the temples.

When he had finished, the priest stood back to admire his work. "Isn't it beautiful," he called out to the old master. "Yes," replied the old man, "but there is something missing. Help me over this wall and I'll put it right for you."

After hesitating, the priest lifted the old fellow over and set him down. Slowly, the master walked to the tree near the center of the garden, grabbed it by the trunk, and shook it. Leaves showered down all over the garden. "There," said the old man, "you can put me back now."

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### Up Coming Events

#### **Robe Offering Ceremony (kathina)**

When: Friday, October 21st

Where : 13905 Chestnut Dr, Eden Prairie, MN

Time : 6.45 PM to 9.00 PM

#### **Two Events in Mankato**

##### ***Evening Retreat***

When: Saturday, October 30th

Where: Sun Moon Yoga Studio, Mankato, MN

Time: 6.30 PM to 9.30 PM

Contact : Message Melissa (507) 726 2279

Email: [slippery-snake@care2.com](mailto:slippery-snake@care2.com)

##### **Lecture On Fundamentals of Buddhism**

When: November 1st 2005

Where :Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

Time : 5.00 PM to 7.30 PM

Contact : Arthur Errickson (507) 345 6132

Email: [a\\_errickson@hotmail.com](mailto:a_errickson@hotmail.com)

**Triple Gem of the North** Is a 501 (C) 3 approved tax-deductible Non-profit organization based in state of Minnesota. We operate in Minneapolis, St Paul, Chanhassen, St Peter and Mankato. Your tax-deductible contribution will assist in our endeavor to serve the community through weekly meditation classes, day long retreats and the assistance in building a permanent retreat center. Triple Gem is also heavily involved in various disaster relief efforts such as Tsunami relief in Sri Lanka, and Hurricane Katrina. This is done in the spirit of the teachings of the Buddha.