

December 2005

Issue No: 6



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

### Weekly Meditation

Monday Evening

6.30 PM to 8.00 PM

At

Unitarian Universalist 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 Library

Lewis Room

7711 Kerber Drive

Chanhassen, MN

Call Ralph@ 952-934-9727

### Hope for the New Year



Many people make resolutions for the New Year. We pretend that at this new beginning, we can finally make changes for ourselves we were unable to make in the past. We hope that somehow we can begin the New Year with a new mind and new habits. These promises usually turn up empty. Maybe we want to lose weight, but after a week or two we are back to eating junk food. We get distracted. There is a minor detail we forget when making New Year's resolutions: life. After the New Year's celebration, it keeps going on as it ever did. Our days, weeks, and years are as a spinning record that repeats slightly varying patterns again and again. If we bring our mind out of the pattern for a short time, it is easy to see what we could do differently, how our daily existence could be altered. Once back in the cycle, we run into the same excuses, the same habits. We forget ourselves in the drama of everyday life.

When we form bad habits, we are usually trying to hide from something within ourselves. We might cover up our pain by drinking, doing drugs, eating sweets, or fighting with loved ones. We might even use charitable work to cover up our pain. To change a habit, we have to be willing to see what is being covered up. That requires the ability to be in the present moment without judging what is happening. Meditation helps us to see ourselves clearly. When we can do that, we no longer need to hide behind our habits. We can see past the lies that enable us to harm ourselves and others.

On special occasions, the Buddha asked us to contemplate four aspects of the past year. We are to remember actions we have made that have been helpful to us, that have created happiness, and think strongly, "I will continue to do these helpful actions in the next year." Then we can think of the harmful actions that we may regret and think strongly, "I will not do these harmful actions again." We can also think of the harmful things we avoided and think, "I will continue to avoid that which causes harm." Finally, we can think of the helpful actions we never got around to and think, "I will start to do these helpful actions this year."

When we learn to exist in the present moment with mindfulness, we are empowered to make new choices every day. With this knowledge, change becomes easier and more joyful. Then we see the mistake we have been making is in believing that we are making a sacrifice by giving up our vices. The truth is, we are sacrificing much more by holding on to what is harmful.

— Malissa Lotentz —

## Happiness and Peace

What is real happiness? At a simple level, we feel joy when we fulfill a goal. That is the bottom level of happiness. This is conditional and often leads us back to unhappiness. When you lose something you have gained, you feel unhappy. Real happiness does not depend on any external force. It is not really an emotion. If you don't have expectations, you are in the present moment. Whatever happens, you feel happy. That is the bottom level of real happiness. No one can disturb it. No one can break it down. If somebody develops that real happiness permanently, we call it peace. We don't see any difficulties in peace. It is a point beyond joy.

The Buddha teaches that attachment brings pain and unhappiness. Many people don't understand this point. For example, a king who was close to Buddha got mad at him when he heard about this. He came to the Buddha and told him,

"This is the last time I visit the temple. I won't be coming back. I heard you delivering a speech where you said that you can become unhappy because of attachment. I do not like what you said."

The Buddha , "My new Presponded, "Who do you most love in the palace?"

The King answeredrincess who I married recently."

Then the Buddha said, "Are there any other people who live in the palace?"

"Yes, there are a lot of other people who live in the palace."

The Buddha said, "Just think, what if your lovely wife and one of your workers got sick. How would you feel? Do you feel the same for both or more for the first?"

The king said, "I wouldn't be able to handle myself. I cannot think how I would control myself if she got sick."

The Buddha replied, "That is what I taught. If you hold something too tight, that is how much you will feel pain. It is very far from compassion and loving-kindness because clinging means there is ignorance. You can be with people and you can share your feelings. You can have love, but always protect your mind and others. If your wife gets sick and you cry and your mind is clouded with stress, you won't help her much. You have to be smart enough to deal with the situation and find out what you can do for her. You lose that by having attachment." When we have attachment with happiness it is impermanent. Real happiness is not involved with attachments or pleasures.

In meditation class, we practice dana, or donation. It is different than paying for a service. When you pay money for something, you are exchanging goods and services. Donation means you give without expecting anything in return. Once you give something, it is gone. It helps get rid of greed and attachment. Our mind is always saying, "Pay less, have more." Giving dana helps you to think about that. Sometimes when we donate money we expect something in return. If you give in that way you are not really giving, you are still holding it.

There is a story about a businessman who gave a lot of money to a Zen temple. One day he said to a monk, " Bhante, you know I work hard. I have developed my business for a long time, but I would like to give you this money for your temple." The monk said, "OK, just keep it here." The businessman felt uncomfortable because the monk didn't care about his donation. Sensing this the monk to his disciple, "Go and drop this money in the ocean." Then the man got mad. He asked the monk why he was doing this. "It took a long time for me to earn this money. I am expecting you to build a temple and people will respect me."

The monk said, "You did your part by donating money. I am the one who received it. Now it is my job to do whatever I want to do with it. I decided to throw it into the sea."

When you make a donation, if you are really free from attachment, it makes joy within you. That is real happiness. It doesn't break down. Giving physical things is the first step because we are attached to physical things.

The second step is choosing between responding to the world with our emotions or reacting mindfully. This is called sila. By reacting emotionally you feed your senses, you feed your desire. To control your emotions you have to use your mind. Just think, if you are diabetic you have to eat less sugar. After a while, you find happiness from being able to control your blood sugar. That is one level. Controlling emotion is beyond that. Think about anger. If you can understand your anger and not react to it, you are able to stop playing with that emotion and you become happier. That is the second level. This leads you to develop your wisdom.

When you develop your mindfulness with meditation, you learn about happiness and peace. Then you see that happiness does not depend on anyone. If it depends on someone or something it is only a pleasure, not real happiness. Our practice is to find real happiness. That is unbreakable.

— *Bhante sathi* —

## The Nature of Things....



**Two monks were washing their bowls in the river when they noticed a scorpion that was drowning. One monk immediately scooped it up and set it upon the bank. In the process he was stung. He went back to washing his bowl and again the scorpion fell in. The monk saved the scorpion and was again stung. The other monk asked him,**

**"Friend, why do you continue to save the scorpion when you know it's nature is to sting?"**

**"Because," the monk replied, "to save it is my nature."**

## New Year Blessing Ceremonies

**Triple Gem of the North** is hosting a Buddhist blessing and chanting ceremony to wish everyone a happy and peaceful 2006 at the following locations:

**When: January 2nd**

**Where:** Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
937 Charles Ave.,  
Mankato, MN

**Time:** 6.30 PM

**When: January 6th**

**Where:** Heartwood Mindfulness Center  
3706 E 34th St., Minneapolis  
(North of Longfellow Park)

**Time:** 6:30 PM

### **Core Of Buddhism**

#### **Buddhist Classes By Bhante Sathi**

January 13th 6:30 PM 7:45pm — Course 1

January 20th 6.30 PM 7.45pm — Course 2

**Where:** Heartwood Mindfulness Center  
3706 E 34th St.  
(North of Longfellow Park.)  
Minneapolis MN

Limited Space, registration required. Contact  
Darcy (612) 201 7214

E-mail [info@triplegem.org](mailto:info@triplegem.org)

## Voice Of Wisdom

**Triple Gem Of The North**  
**PO Box 323**

**St Peter, MN 56082**

**Email: [info@triplegem.org](mailto:info@triplegem.org).**

**Phone: 612-227-8188**

**Fax: 952-314-4863**

**Web: [www.triplegem.org](http://www.triplegem.org)**

## Meditation Retreats

January 7th — Chanhassen

Where ; Chanhassen library

Time; 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM

The retreat will consist of a series of 30 minute sitting and walking meditations followed by a brief dharma talk and question and answers . A light snack will be served. All are welcome. This event is free, but tax deductible contributions are appreciated. Please bring a cushion to sit on.

To Register : Call Ralph at 952-934-9727 or

Email [info@triplegem.org](mailto:info@triplegem.org)

January 22nd — Mankato

Where ; Sun Moon Yoga Studios in Mankato

Time; 1.00 PM to 5.00 PM

This retreat also will consist of a series of walking and sitting meditation followed by a brief dharma talk and question and answers .

To Register: Call Melissa at (507)726-2279 Or

Email [retreat.info@gmail.com](mailto:retreat.info@gmail.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.