

GRASSROOTS DHAMMA



Winter 2020

Teacher Biographies and
Online Registration are
available at

WWW.TCVC.INFO



WINTER RETREAT FEBRUARY 14-21, 2020

Chas DiCapua and Rebecca Bradshaw with Shelly Graf

***Living in Harmony with the Truth of Life:
Change, Unsatisfactoriness and Not-Self***

One way to describe the progression of Dharma practice is that we live our lives ever more congruently with the truth of how things are. As our capacity to be present deepens, our ability to see the three characteristics (Impermanence, Unsatisfactoriness, Interconnectivity) of conditioned experience deepens and refines. This leads to a natural letting go of behaviors of mind and body that run contrary to these truths. What remains is a lightness of heart and mind, and a deep contentment with the experiences of life. The retreat will use the classical approach of Samatha/Vipassana, or stopping and looking, to facilitate this process.

Dear Friends,

TCVC has renewed our commitment to cultivating a retreat environment that is welcoming to all. We have broadened our understanding of how racial trauma is endemic in our lives, especially for people of color, and we are actively seeking ways to make vipassana practice available to all communities. It is our intention that all may feel safe and respected on their TCVC retreat.

One of the ways that we make TCVC retreats accessible is by keeping retreat costs low through the practice of generosity. Members of the community have consistently supported TCVC through donations, for which we are grateful. We have consistently been able to accommodate all scholarship requests (up to a maximum of half the cost of a double room).

Dana, or generosity, sustains our organization, and we are always looking for members of the community who have means to give in the capacity they are able. Donations support both our Retreat and Scholarship funds. If you feel inspired by the Buddha's teachings and the retreats offered by TCVC, please consider making a donation at www.TCVC.INFO or mailing a check to P.O. Box 14683, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Of course, generosity can take many forms. If you are able to volunteer, or if you have a special skill, especially a technical or organizational skill, that you think might be helpful, let us know. Thank you for your wonderful commitment and practice.

May you all be well,
TCVC Board

Living Congruently with The Truth of Things by Chas DiCaputa

Anyone who has canoed can tell you how difficult it is to paddle up stream or into the wind. Each stroke pushes you a couple feet forward, only to be pushed back by the wind or current almost the same amount! Turn around though, and paddle with the wind at your back, or in the same direction of the current, and the canoe glides forward with ease.

This same dynamic holds true for how we engage with our lives. When our thoughts, speech and actions are congruent with the truth of the way things are, there is much less difficulty and suffering in our lives. When they are not congruent, life is full of conflict, feels like a battle, and entails much suffering.

The Buddha's teaching on the Three Characteristics of Conditioned Existence provide us with the framework for how to approach our lives so that they are leading towards, and manifesting in, happiness and not suffering. Of course, just the teachings themselves can't provide us with the promise of the Buddha's path, we must experience them for ourselves and internalize them so that, our view of this life becomes Wise View. To the degree that we can do this, is to the degree that we can move through this life with equanimity and ease. Like paddling down river.

Anicca (Impermanence), Dukkha (Unsatisfactoriness, stress, vulnerability), and Anatta (Not-Self, interconnectedness, not in control) are the three characteristics. Yet, they are actually not completely separate. In the same way that sunlight goes through a prism and gets expressed as blue, green, red and other colors, the truth of the way things are gets expressed in these three ways. Yet just as there is only one light that goes through the prism, the suchness of this world is as it is. There aren't multiple truths, only multiple manifestations. This is why we find each characteristic in the other two, and the other two in each characteristic. That we are not separate selves and made up of the myriad conditions of the universe means that we are not in control. This is an expression of not self, and is also the vulnerability aspect of Dukkha. Of course, those myriad conditions are constantly changing which brings in the Anicca aspect.

When we are on board with the truth of things, we can be in traffic and not suffer over it. Might we prefer that we be going faster than 5mph? Sure, but there isn't the suffering over it, because we know we are not in control and that life will present itself to us in ways we don't find appealing at times. One time I was on a very long and difficult hike. We were on the last mile of the hike and my feet and back were very sore, and energetically, I was exhausted. Luckily, I was able to approach the moment with, "This is the experience of the last mile to the car on a difficult hike". It wasn't even about me per se (Anatta), but an experience that many people have in such a situation. It became both interesting to pay attention to, and also a very clear form of Dukkha with the body having its aches and pains. Anicca was a comfort, knowing the relief that I would feel with the pack off my back and the weight off my feet.

A helpful practice that we can cultivate in our day to day lives is to notice when we are suffering, and then look and see which characteristic we are resisting. Even if we can't name the exact characteristic (remember, they are all intertwined), we can simply notice that we are resisting the way things are right now, and that it lawfully leads to suffering. Of course, this doesn't mean we don't have discernment and boundaries in our lives with situations and other people. Sometimes a clear and firm "no" to a situation is what's called for. What it does mean is that, using the three characteristics as a guiding principal and experience, we start to put down the illusion that controlling life is the way to happiness. With the putting down of that delusion, that ignorance, we let go of the cause of our suffering and find peace, which is what our hearts and minds are so wanting.

TCVC is a community of people interested in developing and deepening their meditation practice. We provide opportunities to hear and practice the teachings of vipassana (insight) and metta (lovingkindness) meditation, with an emphasis on residential retreats led by senior teachers in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.

Registration for February 14-21 Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw with Shelly Graf

Registration is due by January 18, 2020. There is a \$25 late fee after January 18th.

Register online at WWW.TCVC.INFO or mail your registration to Jean Fagerstrom,

3157 32nd Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Name _____ Please identify your gender _____

Address _____ City _____ State: _____

Zip code _____ Phone _____ Email _____

This is my first retreat I can help set up or clean up I need a ride I can give a ride

I have special accessibility, dietary or other needs. (Please enclose a description or email the registrar.)

I use a CPAP or other medical device. (Please specify or contact the registrar.)

I need an assisted listening device.

Enclosed is a scholarship request for \$ _____ Maximum scholarship is \$240

Optional Roommate Request _____

\$ _____ Retreat Fee* Shared \$480 Single \$625

\$ _____ Add \$25 late fee if mailing after January 18, 2020

\$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC

\$ _____ Total Enclosed (Make check payable to TCVC)

*The teachers that we ask to lead our retreats do not request or receive any compensation from us for their teaching. At the end of the retreat, students are encouraged to practice *dana* (generosity) by offering a donation to the teachers.

Vipassana (insight) meditation is a simple and direct practice: the moment-to-moment investigation of the mind/body process through calm, open and precise awareness. Learning to observe experience from a place of spacious stillness enables one to relate to life with a balance of wisdom and compassion.

Held in noble silence, the retreat includes sitting and walking meditation, instructions, Dharma talks, and group and individual meetings with the teachers.

As the teachings of the Buddha are considered priceless, they have traditionally been offered freely. The teachers do not receive payment from TCVC for teaching. The registration fee covers room and board, travel expenses for the teachers and other expenses.

At the end of the retreat, students are encouraged to offer a donation to the teachers to support their living expenses so they may continue to practice and teach.

To apply for a scholarship, include a letter with your registration giving the background of your need. Scholarship requests must be received by the due date and are limited to one retreat per person per calendar year. Those who wish may help others by donating to the TCVC Scholarship Fund or Retreat Fund.

Accommodations at the Koinonia Retreat Center have modern plumbing. Handicap accessible and single rooms are available on a first-come basis. You may leave Koinonia's phone number, 888-801-7746, with family for emergency contact only.

Retreat Schedule

Fri. 2/14	Registration	3:00–6:00 PM
	Evening meal	6:00 PM
	Retreat opens	7:30 PM
Fri. 2/21	Retreat ends	After 10:30 AM brunch

Attendance Yogis are expected to arrive by 6:00 PM on opening day and to stay for the duration. There are no exceptions.

Yogi jobs are included in the schedule for all participants. These mindful work periods are assigned on a first come, first served basis at check-in time.

Meals Vegetarian meals begin with an evening meal from 6:00–7:00 PM on Friday night and end with brunch on the last day of the retreat.

Registration Send a check for the full amount to secure your registration. If you are applying for a scholarship, subtract the scholarship amount requested from the registration fee.

Cancellations Notify the registrar if you need to cancel. TCVC retains a \$75 fee for cancellations received before the due date, \$100 after the due date.

You will receive an acknowledgement of registration by email. Shortly thereafter, you will receive a confirmation of your status for the retreat (registration or wait list). Approximately one month before the retreat, you will receive an email giving you more information about the retreat. **If you have any questions or special needs, please email retreats@tcvc.info or call or text the registrar, Jean Fagerstrom at 612-423-2926.**

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*Retreats are held at Koinonia Retreat
Center near Annandale, MN
www.KoinoniaRetreatCenter.com*

Contact Us

retreats@tcvc.info

TCVC retreats are appropriate for both beginning and experienced meditators. We are committed to cultivating a retreat environment that is welcoming to people of diverse identities, including those of all races, ethnicities, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, abilities and ages. It is our aim that all may feel safe and respected on their TCVC retreat.

TCVC CALENDAR

Dates	Teachers
Feb 14-21, 2020 <i>Registration opens 11/1/19</i>	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw with Shelly Graf
June 12-20, 2020 <i>Registration opens 3/1/20</i>	Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters with Vance Prior
February 12-19, 2021	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 11-19, 2021	Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters With Vance Prior

Directions to Koinonia from Minneapolis

394 West to 169
North on 169 for 1/4 mile
West on Highway 55 2.5 miles past Annandale
South (Left) on County Road 3 for 4/10 of a mile
West (Right) on 80th Street for one mile
South (Left) on Pilger Avenue for 2/10 of a mile
Allow two hours travel time from Minneapolis.