

GRASSROOTS DHAMMA



Winter 2021

Teacher Biographies and
Online Registration are
available at

WWW.TCVC.INFO



WINTER RETREAT FEBRUARY 12-17, 2021

Chas DiCapua and Rebecca Bradshaw

Navigating the world with an open heart

We will gather together as a community to develop the qualities of heart and mind that allow us to meet this life as it manifests with resiliency and caring engagement. These qualities will strengthen inner peace and allow us to interact in the world with wisdom and kindness.

This online retreat will provide structure through guided vipassana and loving kindness meditations, as well as instructions for walking meditation and mindfulness of our daily activities. We will meet in zoom groups to explore our practice more deeply; in addition, we will have daily dharma talks and time for big group questions and answers.

To support the integrity of the retreat, participants will be encouraged to commit to the entire retreat.

Dear Friends,

TCVC is offering a four-day residential retreat for black, indigenous and people of color-identified (BIPOC) practitioners May 25-30, 2022 at Metta Meditation

Center in Janesville, MN. The guiding teacher for this retreat will be mixed-media artist Amana Bembry Johnson who is a participant in the Spirit Rock Teacher Training Program. The theme and structure of this retreat will be organized collaboratively with members of the BIPOC meditation community in the Twin Cities. If you would like to join in the planning of this retreat, please email Zenzele Isoke at zenzeleisoke@gmail.com.

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. TCVC has set up a dedicated scholarship fund to support the Memorial Day 2022 BIPOC retreat and future BIPOC retreats. You can also round up your retreat fee to support this fund. When you make a donation to TCVC, you can specify that your contribution go to this fund. 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.

Thank you for your wonderful commitment and practice.

May you all be well,
TCVC Board

Buddhism From a Feminine Paradigm by Rebecca Bradshaw

Over the last years I have explored more deeply practicing and teaching Buddhist meditation from what could be called the feminine paradigm. What do I mean when I say this? We're not talking about gender even though the language is gendered. We're not talking about men and women. We're talking about a way of orienting towards the world from the feminine archetype, a way that embraces embodiment, relationship, intuition, feeling, being, interdependence, and immanence or embeddedness.

It's important to remember that we all have mixes of what is called masculine and feminine energy. You can also call it yin and yang energy if that's more comfortable for you. For me it's important to keep the word feminine in this description because sexism is closely tied to the devaluation of the feminine archetype. At the same time as we see the qualities of the feminine archetype devalued, we also see the devaluation and oppression of women and women's ways of being.

Why is it important that we emphasize a feminine archetype? This orientation is one that has been increasingly devalued over the last two to five thousand years (depending on how you measure the rise of patriarchy.) During this time, we see an increasing emphasis on what is known as a masculine paradigm or yang energy: emphasis on independence, conceptual thinking, doing, goal orientation, and transcendence. While these are useful qualities that we all need, they have become increasingly unbalanced by a lack of valuing and manifesting the feminine archetype, or yin energy. We see this everywhere in the unbalanced and destroyed world around us, especially in white supremacist and so called modern culture. This lack of balance manifests as worship of independence and individualism, being out of touch with our environment, focus on getting what we can without concern for others, unbridled predatory capitalism, the destruction of our natural world and planet, income inequality and racial oppression and people being increasingly disembodied and out of touch with intuition and feeling.

We also can see this lack of balance in the Buddhist teachings. The Buddha was born during a time when patriarchy was growing in strength. While I think that it was quite likely that the Buddha himself had very balanced feminine and masculine energies, the Buddhist teachings were primarily preserved in the Theravada lineage for over 2000 years by a male monastic tradition that generally emphasized the more masculine energies. One has to wonder how this transmission influenced what was preserved and how it was preserved. What did we lose in this transmission? What flavor of the teachings got preserved? In the sutras, we see a tendency towards asceticism, transcendence, striving for a goal, and a stronger emphasis on the mind quality of wisdom over the heart quality of compassion. We can see a stark example of this preference of the masculine over the feminine in the dying out of the female monastic lineage, likely due to lack of material support, and in the resistance from traditional quarters to reinstating full monastic recognition to women, citing sexist exclusions in the scriptures to support this resistance.

We can see the tyranny of the lack of balance within ourselves in our endless pursuit of perfectionism, our restlessness and always doing, doing, doing, wanting more and more, having forgotten how to be, how to relax. We may find ourselves unconsciously doing our meditation practice from internalized patriarchal conditioning, resulting in over-efforting, controlling our experience, and struggling to obtain transcendent blissful states.

Many of us are looking to reclaim the power, beauty, and gentleness of the feminine archetype within, no matter what our gender identification is. For most of us, our hearts and minds have been thoroughly colonized by patriarchy as the dominant cultural energy in this country and increasingly in the world, and we know we need balance, we need to reclaim our ability for feeling deeply, for embodied wisdom, for sensing the sacredness in this very world.

Both the Buddhist teachings and our dominant cultural paradigm need to shift towards the feminine. In fact, I think it's the only thing that might save us as a species and save our planet from destruction. The Buddhist teachings can offer as a way to strengthen the qualities that we need and we're going to need in this world, the qualities of feeling and embodiment and attention to our environment around us.

First, we need to learn how to arrive in our bodies, in our sense experience, not so easy to do in our mind-oriented dominant culture. We need to learn how to connect to what we feel in a balanced way. We need to let wisdom emerge from a place of intuition and heart. We need to arrive here and let transcendence come from within this world of form.

Through sense embodiment and deep connection with life as it unfolds, the contractions that bind us have space to dissolve. This grants our hearts and minds the freedom to come into intimate connection with ourselves, other people, animals, plants, and all life. From this abiding presence, we respond to life's challenges with greater understanding and compassion. For more information about Rebecca's teaching, you can visit www.rebeccabradshaw.org.

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 12-17, 2021 with Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw

Register online at WWW.TCVC.INFO or mail your registration to Phil Harper,
1148 Hague Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104

Name _____ Please identify your gender _____
Address _____ City _____ State: _____
Zip code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
☐ This is my first retreat
☐ Enclosed is a scholarship request for \$ _____ Maximum scholarship is \$25
\$ _____ Retreat Fee* Base Fee ☐ \$50 Round up for BIPOC Retreat ☐ \$100
If you round up, \$50 is tax-deductible
\$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC Retreat Fund ☐ Scholarship Fund ☐
BIPOC Retreat Fund ☐
\$ _____ Total Enclosed (Make check payable to TCVC)

*The teachers who 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 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.

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 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

Most people will be participating from home. If you are interested in doing a retreat in solitude, there are many individual retreat cabins available in Minnesota.

Retreat Schedule

The Zoom links and retreat schedule will be emailed to you before the retreat. The retreat opens on Friday, February 12 at 4PM CST with an important orientation meeting. The retreat ends late morning on Wednesday, February 17.

To support your independent practice the teachers will offer three daily Zoom sessions: morning instructions, late afternoon Dharma talk, and early evening Metta sit.

You will have two group meetings, one with each teacher, every other day.

Meals Try to anticipate what you'll need ahead of time to avoid having to go out during the retreat. This applies not only to food, but also medications and other daily things that you need.

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.

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 two weeks 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 the registrar, Phil Harper, at retreats@tcvc.info or call/text 612-396-5632.**

Cancellations Please notify the registrar as soon as possible if you need to cancel. Participation in this retreat is limited; your cancellation may open the retreat for someone on the waiting list. Retreat fees are not refundable.

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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 12-17, 2021 <i>Registration opens 12/1/20</i>	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 11-19, 2021 <i>8 day in person retreat at St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon, WI</i>	Teachers will be announced in the Spring newsletter
February 18-25, 2022	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
May 25-30, 2022 Contact Zenzele Isoke at zenzeleisoke@gmail.com	BIPOC Retreat with Amana Bembry Johnson

Contact Us

retreats@tcvc.info