

GRASSROOTS DHAMMA



Summer 2022

*TCVC Annual
Meeting and Potluck*

In Person!

Everyone is welcome

Saturday, May 21th

2-4 pm

Home of Naomi Baer

1812 Princeton Avenue

St. Paul, MN

651-698-1458

SUMMER VIRTUAL RETREAT JUNE 17-21, 2022

With Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters

Well Being and Balance - Within Ourselves and Within the World

There are very beautiful and effective teachings in the Dhamma that can support us in establishing a greater sense of inner safety, balance, and deep well being while navigating through these epic times of change. This retreat will support the understanding and strengthening of those qualities for ourselves, as well as for the benefit of all beings.

Teacher Biographies and Online Registration are available at

WWW.TCVC.INFO

Dear Friends,

The past two years are reminiscent of one of Steve Armstrong's favorite end-of-retreat quotes: "What a long strange trip it's been" (from Grateful Dead's "Truckin"). Surely this will be a time we'll all remember. While many organizations have resumed in-person retreats, TCVC will again host a Zoom retreat in June. In 2023 we hope to resume in-person retreats at St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon, Wisconsin. We'll also consider adding an additional online retreat. Over 80% of respondents answered "Yes" to our Survey question "Would you be interested in attending online TCVC retreats in the future, even after we resume in-person retreats?"

We're grateful to Benjamin Hohl who responded to our request for a volunteer with Wordpress skills. He guided us through a series of options for the tcvc.info website and implemented a new design that makes it easier for people to register for a retreat, donate and get added to our mailing list. Thanks so much, Ben!

After over 20 years of service as "Retreat Coordinator", Naomi Baer is stepping down in her role of scheduling retreats with the teachers and various retreat venues. From the Tao Center to Christine Center to Koinonia and points in between, Naomi brought clarity and simplicity to this important role. She's also managed and served as registrar for many retreats. Retreat managers have appreciated Naomi's support on opening day, showing up early at almost every retreat to help set up. Thank you, Naomi!

Jean Fagerstrom has offered to serve as our new "Retreat Coordinator"—once again! Jean has been involved with TCVC over 20 years also. Along with Wendy Morris and Joanne Hedrick, Jean helped write the original TCVC Bylaws and incorporate the organization as a 501(c)3 non-profit in 2006. She was the first president, as the organization previously functioned as a cooperative with council-style leadership. In the last 20 years, Jean has also retrieved and distributed mail from the TCVC PO Box on a weekly basis. Thank you, Jean!

The Black Women's June retreat with Amana Brembry-Johnson has been cancelled. Thanks to everyone who rounded up their retreat fees and otherwise donated to TCVC's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) fund. As opportunities arise, TCVC will offer these funds to support BIPOC retreats in the upper Midwest.

Thanks to all of you who have attended our retreats and offered your financial and other support. We hope to continue practicing together for years to come. Best Wishes, The TCVC Board

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.

Universal Beauty and Well-Being by Steve Armstrong

The traditional 'Qualities of a Beautiful Mind' are Generosity, Morality, Renunciation, Wisdom, Effort, Patience, Truthfulness, Resolve, Equanimity and Loving Kindness

Beauty has been said to be in the eye of the beholder. But the physical eye sees only the beauty of the world around us while the mind's eye sees the beauty within. This deeper vision is what sees and knows the inner beauty which creates and establishes a profound sense of well-being.

We all know teachers, family members, friends or acquaintances that we might call beautiful; these people are special because of their generosity, understanding, kindness or integrity. Such qualities have been recognized throughout time and in every culture. People with these qualities are always seen as having the karmic profile of a good human being. This beauty is not culturally specific nor does it change with the most recent standards for goodness; rather, these qualities are universally recognized as the qualities of the inner beauty of the heart. Such beauty is not exclusive to any religion, ethnicity, socio-economic or age group.

What's more, the attainment of this inner beauty is a possibility for everyone. So also is its benefit: a profound sense of well-being.

When any one of us recognizes that we could be more honest, less reactive, more grateful for what we have or more resolute in fulfilling our aspirations, we implicitly have acknowledged two things. First, we have recognized that we do not yet fully manifest the best within us. Second, we have seen that there is as-yet-unrealized potential within our heart for developing the qualities of inner beauty. These two understandings are pre-conditions both for aspiring to change and for making a decisive commitment to further develop our heart. This knowledge is the foundation for a growing sense of well-being.

The qualities of inner beauty purify our heart of three things; the self-aggrandizing activity of attachment, the self-righteousness of aversion and the self-enhancement of delusion. Such purification reveals and strengthens all that is great within us.

All the qualities of inner beauty share three common attributes. They are; nobility, compassion and skillful actions.

The first characteristic of the qualities of inner beauty is that they are all noble (*ariya* in Pali). These qualities are revered, esteemed and acclaimed as honorable and distinguished. A person does not become noble by always possessing or displaying the beautiful qualities; rather, we can see that these qualities inherently affirm this characteristic beauty of heart.

When we are able to let go of our Frank Sinatra-style insistence on doing things 'my way' and instead adjust to acknowledging and accommodating others' ideas and understandings, we abandon defensive rigidity and ennoble our life with simplicity and patience. Such behavior is commendable, even dignified, and manifests the best within us. It takes effort; not the effort of insisting on continuing on our own path, but rather the effort of renunciation or letting go of our way of doing things. We may initially feel like we are being deprived when we have to let go of doing things 'my way', but in fact, making space for and accommodating others actually feels better. We recognize our own goodness when we think, feel and act in this way. Others appreciate such thoughts and behavior too.

Compassion, the second property of inner beauty, makes room for and holds others with care and consideration. When we rest in a non-reactive, balanced strength of mind we make space for others. This humanitarian attitude motivates beneficial actions toward others who are suffering and seeks ways to support wholesome interests everywhere.

We all appreciate it when someone sensitively recognizes and acknowledges our situation and responds with a willingness to connect without condemning. When I take the time to connect with the homeless person on the street, I demonstrate my recognition of and interest in them. I'm not sitting in judgment of their behavior or life condition. I'm also not blaming anyone for the conditions I see; nor am I trying to solve the world's social problems. I am just reaching out to offer the best of human connection: love and acceptance along with support and well-wishing. Not only does the recipient benefit by the love and generosity; I too walk on with a lighter feeling of well-being in my heart.

Skillful actions when touching the world is the third trait of universal beauty. The commitment to awaken to the beautiful qualities of heart is accompanied by the willingness to express them. We allow these qualities to manifest in our thoughts, decisions and actions. For example, suppose when I feel hurt or misunderstood, I tend to isolate from others and freeze up. Skillful action would not lie in explaining, cajoling, or criticizing me; that would not melt the ice that has formed over my heart. However, if someone skillfully, patiently and without reacting waits patiently to hear me when I am ready to speak, all will flow again. Many times, the beautiful heart knows that the confident renunciation of doing more is required. It recognizes that the skillful action often lies in doing less.

Inner beauty can be more fully developed in each of us. If we simply remember them and raise their profile in our hearts these qualities are more accessible. When we actively cultivate these beautiful qualities of mind, we flourish. We, and others, benefit from an enhanced and enduring sense of well-being.

Registration for June 17-21 with Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters

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

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State: _____

Zip code _____ Phone _____ Email _____

This is my first retreat

Enclosed is a scholarship request for \$ _____ Maximum scholarship is \$25

\$ _____ Retreat Fee* \$50

\$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC Retreat Fund Scholarship Fund

\$ _____ 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, metta meditation, and group question and answer sessions 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, Retreat Fund or BIPOC 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, June 17 at 6:00 pm, and the retreat ends on Tuesday, June 21 at 5:00 pm.

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

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.

Treasurer's Report 2021

Retreat Fund	11,893
Retreat Deposits	1,200
Scholarship Fund	3,364
BIPOC Fund	<u>3,222</u>
Balance	19,679

Thanks to everyone who has donated to TCVC. With your support, many people have been able to undertake intensive retreat practice here in the Midwest. If you feel inspired by the Buddha's teachings on Dana and the retreats offered by TCVC, please consider making a donation at www.TCVC.INFO or mailing a check to 3518 E. 25th St, Minneapolis, MN 55406.

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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.

***In person retreats will be held at
St. Anthony Spirituality Center
in Marathon, Wi.***

<https://sarcenter.com>

Contact Us

retreats@tcvc.info

TCVC CALENDAR

Dates	Teachers
TCVC Annual Meeting May 21, 2022 2-4 pm	
June 17-21, 2022 online	Kamala Masters and Steve Armstrong
February 17-24, 2023	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 16-24, 2023	Kamala Masters