



TCVC 19th Annual Summer Retreat with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters

June 8–17, 2012

Koinonia Retreat Center
near Annandale, MN

Registration on page 3
This photo from younger days

ANNUAL MEETING/POTLUCK

Saturday, April 21

7 PM Informal Sitting Meditation

7:30–8:30 PM Potluck / Meeting

Home of Elizabeth Archerd

5223 32nd Ave. So., Minneapolis

Phone: 612-729-6168

This year, TCVC is doing something a bit different for its annual meeting—a potluck party. We'll sit together for awhile, have an informal meeting to conduct the "official business" of TCVC, and share food and conversation.

You are warmly invited to attend this gathering, which is being hosted at the home of Elizabeth Archerd. Please bring a dish to share. Thanks to Elizabeth for opening her house for this event.

The annual meeting is organized by the TCVC Board, which presently consists of Elizabeth Archerd, Matthew Buzzard, Naomi Baer, Nora Murphy, Joanne Skarjune, Todd Stitt and Bob Zeglovitch.

The potluck will be a nice way for us to connect with dharma friends and a chance for everyone to share their thoughts on future retreats.

TCVC gives a big thanks to registrars Bob Zeglovitch and Matthew Buzzard, and retreat managers Gail Iverson and Nora Murphy for their kind and generous service this past year. Thanks to Jean Fagerstrom for attending to all of our postal needs.

TCVC retreats happen because of the energy of many people. If you are interested in helping TCVC in any way please contact Matthew Buzzard at 612-810-7703.

The Preciousness of Our Human Life

by Kamala Masters

As a human being, we have the greatest potential of all creatures on earth to realize the Dhamma, the true nature of reality; to experience an ineffable, unconditional peace; and to discover a way of living that is in harmony with the profound truths of life. But, according to the Buddha, our human birth is very rare. There is a classic story about this rarity in the Pali Canon, the ancient text recording his teachings:

The Buddha was speaking to a group of monks. He said, *"Monks, suppose that this great earth were totally covered with water and a man were to toss a yoke with a single hole into the water. A wind from the West would push it East; a wind from the East would push it West; a wind from the North would push it South; a wind from the South would push it North. And suppose a blind sea turtle were there. It would come to the surface only once every 100 years. Now what do you suppose the chances would be that a blind turtle, coming once to the surface every 100 years, would stick his neck into the yoke with a single hole?"*

And the monks answered, *"It would be very unusual, Sir, that a blind turtle coming to the surface once every hundred years would stick his neck into the yoke."*

And the Buddha replied, *"And just so, it is very, very rare that one attains the human state."*

That is the example the Buddha gave of how rare the chances are and how precious it is to be born as a human being. If this is so—and even if it isn't—I ask myself this question: Am I taking care to live my life in a way that honors this precious human birth and makes the best use of it?

Now that I am getting older and hearing of so many friends with health issues, and also remembering the many who have passed away, this question comes to mind frequently. In the past few years, it has stimulated greater

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The Preciousness of Our Human Life continued

renunciation and resolve in my own heart and mind. For this reason, each year I take some time for personal retreat. In January of 2011, I went to Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha, to a retreat center that is an extension of Sayadaw U Pandita's monastery in Burma. As many of you know, being on retreat is not always a pleasant and serene experience. A lot of it is experiencing the dross of one's life—the boring and sometimes painful thought patterns that repeatedly appear, the painful physical sensations of the body, the mental and emotional realms that can be hard to bear—along with all the valleys and plateaus of retreat. It's just how it is. Of course, there are all the serene experiences and deepening understanding as well.

Generally, when I'm on retreat, I don't read anything, not even Dhamma material. But because I wanted to frequently remind myself of the preciousness of this human life so that I wouldn't practice casually, I brought along some written encouragement that I want to share with you.

One was by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and it added tremendous value to my daily practice:

“Ask yourself how many of the billions of the inhabitants of the planet have any idea of how rare it is to have been born as a human being. How many of those who understand the rarity of human birth ever think of even using that chance to practice the Dharma? How many of those who think of practice actually do practice? How many of those who start really continue? How many of those who practice continue and attain ultimate realization? Indeed those who attain ultimate realization compared to those who do not are as few as the stars you can see at daybreak. As long as you fail to recognize the true value of human existence, you will just fritter your life away in futile activity and distraction. When life comes all too soon to its inevitable end, you will not have achieved anything worthwhile at all. But once you really see the unique opportunity that human life can bring, you will definitely direct all your energy into reaping its true worth.”

In addition, the following words of the Buddha have often inspired me to continue expanding the heart in compassion, and developing the mind to open more deeply to liberating wisdom: *“Neither mother nor father, nor any other relative can do as much good as your own well-directed mind.”*

To develop a well-directed mind requires the commitment of repeated intention and steadfast resolve to incline the mind towards what is wholesome

and beneficial for oneself and others. It also requires the wisdom of renunciation to relinquish what is unwholesome and unbeneficial. Of course, this requires the clarity and honesty of awareness and an investment in gentle, persevering effort. With practice, we develop these invaluable inner qualities. When we do this, we see how mindful awareness of unwholesome habit patterns actually weakens them. We also see how mindful awareness of wholesome patterns of the mind strengthens them. With these resources, we will be inspired to continue our practice, even in the face of challenging conditions.

By developing the determination to continue in spite of seemingly overwhelming obstacles, we strengthen our faith in our ability to navigate the terrain of our lives with greater ease. And in time, we experience how our well-directed mind towards what is beneficial and wise arises spontaneously.

Life comes to its inevitable end all too soon. The activities of a lifetime are just like raindrops falling on a pool of water: they make a few ripples and then disappear. At the end of our lives, are we going to wonder: “Did I have the courage to do more than just what came easily? Have I truly taken advantage of this precious human birth to cultivate wisdom and compassion, and to live in a way that is increasingly more free of greed, hatred and delusion? Did I have the courage to use this precious human birth to fully realize the Dhamma?”

Once we realize the unique opportunity that being born human offers, we will surely want to direct all our energy toward fulfilling our highest potential as a human being.

TREASURY REPORT

Retreat Fund	\$7,877
Retreat Deposits	2,250
Operating Fund	300
Scholarship Fund	2,464
Balance	\$12,891

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.

TCVC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; your donations are tax-deductible. To make a donation, send a check to TCVC, PO Box 14683, Minneapolis, MN 55414, or donate online at www.givemn.org

For more information, contact TCVC's treasurer, Todd Stitt, at 612-729-1715.

REGISTRATION JUNE 8–17 with STEVE ARMSTRONG & KAMALA MASTERS

Retreat registration deadline is May 18. There is a \$25 late fee after May 18.
Mail your registration to Joanne Skarjune, 3518 E 25th St, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Name _____ Male/Female (circle one)
Address _____ City _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone _____ Email _____

- Email confirmation is sufficient Enclosed is a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope for postal confirmation
- 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 contact the registrar.)
- I use a CPAP or other medical device. (Please specify or contact the registrar.)
- Enclosed is a scholarship request for \$_____ (Maximum scholarship is \$275)
- \$_____ Retreat Fee* Double \$550 Single \$725 Singles are available on a first-come basis.
- \$_____ Add \$25 late fee if mailing after May 18
- \$_____ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC: Operations Scholarships Either 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.

Retreats are held in noble silence and include sitting and walking meditation, instructions, Dharma talks, and time for questions with the teacher.

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 Operating Fund.

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 \$25 fee for cancellations received after the due date, along with any cancellation fees charged by the retreat venue.

Schedule

Fri 6/8	Registration	3:00–6:00 PM
	Evening meal	6:00 PM
	Retreat opens	8:00 PM
Sun 6/17	Retreat ends	After lunch

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.

Attendance Please plan to arrive by 6:00 PM on the opening day of the retreat and to stay for the duration. Exceptions must be approved by the retreat manager.

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

Accommodations at the Koinonia Retreat Center have modern plumbing. Handicap accessible and single rooms are available on a first-come basis.

Detailed information about the retreat is mailed upon registration. Contact the registrar, Joanne Skarjune at 612-724-1951 or retreats@tcvc.info

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 on Friday afternoon. Alternate routes and more information is available at KoinoniaRetreatCenter.org.

You may leave Koinonia's phone number, 888-801-7746, with family for emergency contact only.

Twin Cities Vipassana Collective
P.O. Box 14683
Minneapolis, MN 55414

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Twin Cities Vipassana Collective Calendar Visit us at www.tcvc.info

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

Date	Teachers / Event	Contact
June 8–17, 2012 Full-time only	Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters	Joanne Skarjune 612-724-1951 retreats@tcvc.info
Feb. 8–10 or Feb. 8–15, 2013	Chas DiCapua	Naomi Baer 651-698-1458
June 14–23, 2013 Full-time only	Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters	Nora Murphy 651-698-4546
Feb. 14–16 or Feb. 14–21, 2014	Chas DiCapua	Bob Zeglovitch 612-462-0270
June 13–22, 2014 Full-time only	Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters	

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.

Practice opportunities for vipassana meditation are blossoming in the Midwest. In addition to Common Ground Meditation Center, which offers non-residential and residential retreats in and near the Twin Cities, look for other practice opportunities on the “Links” tab at www.tcvc.info