

FALL RETREAT with AMMA THANASANTI



Discoveries in Meditation

by Amma Thanasanti

For many of us it's a life-changing discovery to realize that it's possible to bring attention to our various sensations, thoughts, feelings and all of the associations they trigger, without having to identify with any of it. If, for example, in dealing with illness, rather than think "I am sick" or "Something is wrong with

me," I instead see that there are sensations I am experiencing and health issues that are arising, the shift is liberating. The feelings can be there and I can be OK with them. This is not simply a semantic or conceptual change, but a real difference in the way that I relate to what is arising.

Another discovery is to shift from the sense of me being the one who is doing it, knowing it, making sense out of it, to resting in awareness – an embracing awareness that allows, knows and receives all that arises. When attention is so inclined, awareness becomes a resting place and a refuge. Instead of trying to locate myself by the ordinary reference points of time, place, details and story, attention leans into awareness. This shift is another step towards knowing that who we are cannot be defined by the contents of what we experience.

This movement in meditation can trigger a hunger for the unconditioned and a desire to lose myself there. The assumption that the unconditioned is in stark contrast and separate from the world of all that is conditioned – our bodies, thoughts and feelings – can catalyze pulling back from all that arises in the world. Thinking that the more I pull back the more I can gain access to pure awareness and rest there, I become stuck in another manifestation of separation and duality, and experience suffering. The way out of this suffering is to recognize that the experience of pure awareness can meet the world as it is; it doesn't need to be kept separate and closeted from the world. It's the discovery that right where thoughts of identification occur is where they can be known in awareness. And where they are known is where they end.

Another discovery in meditation is the way that unconditioned love can bring about healing and wholeness. In this unconditioned love, resistance melts away. This love is fully able to engage in the world, in all of its complexity, contradictions and messiness; it doesn't hold back or reserve itself for situations that are safe or simple.

I don't generate this love. But when I experience this love, it penetrates everything I feel in such a way that problems cease to be problems – not because the feelings themselves disappear, but because they are held in a vast, embracing field. When that type of love is the basis through which I engage with what is arising internally or in circumstances in the world, not only do I experience wholeness and integration with all parts of being human, but I experience being part of a web of life where love is a fabric that connects.

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 their teaching. The registration fee covers room and board, transportation for the teachers and other retreat expenses.

At the end of the retreat, students are encouraged to offer a donation to the teacher to support their living expenses so that 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 the Retreat Fund.

Cancellation TCVC retains a \$50 fee for cancellation before September 5. The fee is \$75 after September 5.

Attendance Yogis are expected to arrive by 6:00 PM on opening day and to stay for the duration. Exceptions must be approved by the teacher.

Schedule

10/3	Registration	3:00–6:00 PM
	Evening meal	6:00 PM
	Retreat opens	7:30 PM

10/8 Retreat ends with 10:30 AM brunch

Detailed information about the retreat is mailed upon registration. For questions contact the registrar, Phil Harper, 612-396-5632 or retreats@tcvc.info

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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

From Mpls: 394 West → north on 169 for 1/4 mile → west on Hwy 55 for 55 miles (2.5 miles past Annandale)
→ south/left on Cty Rd 3 for 4/10 mile → west/right on 80th St for one mile → south/left on Pilger

Date	Teachers / Event	Contact
October 3–8, 2014	Amma Thanasanti	Phil Harper 612-396-5632 or retreats@tcvc.info
February 13–20, 2015	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw	Matthew Buzzard 612-810-7703
June 12–21, 2015	Kamala Masters & Steve Armstrong	Evelyn Kaiser 612-412-0072

TWIN CITIES VIPASSANA COLLECTIVE (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.

Grassroots Dhamma is published by TCVC. To join our email or postal mailing list, go to www.tcvc.info and click on *Subscribe to our Newsletter*. Click on the News tab to download current and previous issues.

Registration for TCVC Retreat with Amma Thanasanti October 3–8, 2014

Send to Mimi Jennings, 2222 Hillside Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108 Registration is due Sept. 5, 2014

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 paper confirmation
- This is my first TCVC retreat I can help set up I can help 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 \$195.

\$ _____ Retreat Fee Double \$390 Single \$450

\$ _____ Add \$25 late fee if mailing after September 5

\$ _____ Optional donation to TCVC: Scholarship Fund Retreat Fund

\$ _____ Total Enclosed (Payable to TCVC)