

## Thought-based and Sense-based Reality

By Rebecca Bradshaw

We live most of our lives in thought-created reality. This reality is really our best guess of what is going on in our life. The mind takes sensory input and comes up with a story about the way things are, using lots of assumptions and shortcuts. So thought-based reality is an approximation of the way things are. A lot of it is “made up.”

When we are caught in thought-based reality we believe all of the stories of our mind. As Mark Twain said, “I’ve suffered many terrible misfortunes in my life, most of which never happened.” Just to realize that we don’t have to believe our thoughts is a huge relief. They should’ve taught us that in kindergarten!

Meditation offers us an alternative to living lost in the stories of our mind. It teaches us to connect with our sense experience in the moment, what we can call sense-based reality. We reclaim our direct connection with life through hearing, smelling, sensing the body, tasting, seeing and directly experiencing the heart and mind. It is an embodied meeting with this world, more like “waking down” than “waking up.” We feel our feet touch the ground, taste the first peach of the season, smell decay in the woods, hear the car pass by.

When Suzuki Roshi was asked a question about consciousness, he replied, “I’m just trying to teach my students to hear the birds sing.” He wanted them to connect directly with life through their senses, rather than think about life.

Sensuous reality offers us not only the benefit of more connection and greater intimacy with life, it also allows us to see more clearly the way life truly is. Sensuous reality cuts through delusion and ignorance, this not understanding the way life is.

Dropping into sensuous reality we are more in touch with the way things are, as this wild world we have taken birth into reveals itself. We see the truth of constant change and what this means for how to live in harmony with life. It brings a deep sense of homecoming and belonging.

We drop into sense-based reality with patience. It cannot be commanded. We orient towards our sense experience and then it’s more a matter of allowing or receiving. It’s a kind of softening into life. Feeling the sensations of breathing, hearing a bird sing, seeing the greenness of summer, tasting mint ice cream, touching grief in the heart. Every moment offers a chance to awaken into our humanity through sense-based reality, to awaken out of the dream world of thought-created reality. These awakenings offer us the gift of connecting directly with our sense experience, an opportunity to let life teach us the way things are.

Dear friends,

TCVC welcomes back Chas DiCapua and Rebecca Bradshaw for our winter retreat February 13–20. Monday, February 16 is President’s Day which may be a holiday for some of you. Koinonia is a wonderful place to enjoy winter in Minnesota with fireplaces, lots of indoor walking space, and a beautiful lake and woods. The registration form is on page three of this newsletter.

Hosting retreats locally makes this practice affordable for many people who would not have the time or money to travel to other centers. It makes sense for Chas and Rebecca to come here, than for us to all travel to the east coast to practice with them.

In 2013 we eliminated the weekend option in order to deepen our retreat experience. This has allowed our teachers to give instructions directed solely to those undertaking a week or more of intensive practice. Students are able to settle in more easily without working through the shift that occurs when part of the group leaves.

Because longer retreats are more expensive, TCVC continues to look for ways to keep fees affordable. We operate as an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. (We do pay for one half the manager’s retreat fee.) Shared rooms are offered at below cost and so far we have been able to provide scholarships to everyone who asked.

It’s a joy to facilitate your support of individuals through the Scholarship Fund, or to all practitioners through the Retreat Fund. We encourage you to send a donation for any amount that feels right for you. See page two for more information about donating to TCVC. Thank you so much for your past and future support, however that manifests for you.

Looking forward to practicing with you,  
TCVC Board: Elizabeth Archerd, Naomi Baer, Matthew Buzzard, Joanne Hedrick, Evelyn Kaiser, Nora Murphy, Todd Stitt and Bob Zeglovitch

## REBECCA BRADSHAW and CHAS DICAPUA



**Rebecca Bradshaw** is the Guiding Teacher of the Insight Meditation Center of Pioneer Valley in Easthampton, Massachusetts. She has been practicing Vipassana meditation since 1983 in the United States and Myanmar (Burma) and teaching since 1993. She completed her dharma teacher training at Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, where she is part of the three month retreat teacher team, leads retreats for young adults, and serves as a member of the diversity committee. She also teaches at other locations in the United States and abroad, including Spanish language retreats, bringing a style that explores the convergence of love and wisdom. Rebecca has a master's degree in Counseling Psychology and is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC). Born and raised in Minneapolis, she

enjoys returning to her native state to teach.

**Chas DiCapua** has been practicing mindfulness and Buddhist meditation, primarily in the Theravada school, for over 20 years. He has trained with Burmese meditation masters, western monastics of the Thai Forest tradition and senior western Vipassana teachers.

In 2003 Chas was invited to be the Resident Teacher at the Insight Meditation Society where he continues to serve in that role. He is interested in how the basic material of our everyday lives, including relationships, can be used as a vehicle for awakening.

Chas teaches retreats at IMS, at various centers and sanghas throughout the country, and offers Spiritual Counseling for individuals. He is a member of the IMS Diversity Committee and is actively involved with the work of undoing racism and understanding white privilege.



## LOCAL, REGIONAL and ONLINE RESOURCES

### COMMON GROUND MEDITATION CENTER

2700 East 26th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406  
[www.commongroundmeditation.org](http://www.commongroundmeditation.org)  
612-722-8260

### ARROW RIVER FOREST HERMITAGE

Box 2, RR 7, Site 7, Thunder Bay ON P7C 5V5 Canada  
[www.arrowriver.ca](http://www.arrowriver.ca) 647-477-5919

### LIBERATION PARK

PO Box 205, Norwalk, WI 54648  
[www.liberationpark.org](http://www.liberationpark.org) 608-823-7141

### DHARMA SEED

Dharma talks by teachers of Theravada Buddhism  
[www.dharmaseed.org](http://www.dharmaseed.org)

### MADISON VIPASSANA

P.O. Box 45014  
Madison, WI 53744-5014  
[www.vipassana.net](http://www.vipassana.net)

To receive their e-newsletter, send an empty message to [mimg-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mimg-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

### MID AMERICA DHARMA

455 East 80th Terrace  
Kansas City, MO 64131  
[www.midamericadharmadharma.org](http://www.midamericadharmadharma.org)

### INQUIRING MIND

A Semiannual Journal of the Vipassana Community  
[www.inquiringmind.com](http://www.inquiringmind.com)

## HELP US KEEP TCVC RETREATS AFFORDABLE

Twin Cities Vipassana Collective is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your donations are tax-deductible. Because we are an educational nonprofit, your donation may be eligible for a matching grant from your employer. You may also select TCVC as the recipient of your donation through the United Way.

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

To make a secure on-line donation, go to [TCVC.info](http://TCVC.info) and click on "make a donation" or go to [www.givemn.org](http://www.givemn.org)  
To donate by check, make payable to TCVC and send to

TCVC  
P.O. Box 14683  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Thanks for your support!



## REGISTRATION FEB 13–20 with REBECCA BRADSHAW and CHAS DICAPUA

Retreat registration deadline is January 23. There is a \$25 late fee after January 23.  
Mail your registration to Steve Burt, 3937 21st Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55407

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

- Email confirmation is sufficient  Please send a confirmation via postal mail
- 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 email the registrar.)
- Enclosed is a scholarship request for \$\_\_\_\_\_ Maximum scholarship is \$230
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Retreat Fee\* Shared  \$460 Single  \$610
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Add \$25 late fee if mailing after January 23
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

**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 \$50 fee for cancellations received before the due date, \$75 after the due date.

### Schedule

Fri 2/13	Registration	3:00–6:00 PM
	Evening meal	6:00 PM
	Retreat opens	7:30 PM
Fri 2/20	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. Exceptions must be approved by the teachers.

**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.

**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, Steve Burt at 612-721-1021 or [retreats@tcvc.info](mailto: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.

See also [KoinoniaRetreatCenter.org](http://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](http://www.tcvc.info)**

**Retreats are held at Koinonia Retreat Center near Annandale, MN [www.KoinoniaRetreatCenter.com](http://www.KoinoniaRetreatCenter.com)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Teachers / Event</b>	<b>Contact</b>
February. 13–20, 2015	Chas DiCapua and Rebecca Bradshaw	Steve Burt 612-721-1021 <a href="mailto:retreats@TCVC.info">retreats@TCVC.info</a>
June 12–21, 2015	Kamala Masters and Steve Armstrong	Patrice Koelsch 612-722-3813
February 12–19, 2016	Chas DiCapua and Rebecca Bradshaw	Naomi Baer 651-698-1458
June 17–26, 2016	Kamala Masters and Steve Armstrong	Elizabeth Archerd 612-454-5500

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](http://www.tcvc.info)