

The Dharma Teacher Order Newsletter

April 2018 Volume Four Issue 3

Think Spring...

Your Newsletter Editor, Janet Reale (Kim Liên) reminds you that spring brings “mud.”

Mud...flowers...does it ring a bell?



A Change is in the Air

Catharine Hill (Pháp Lan) - Texas Sangha



Brothers and Sisters,

Last December, when some of you visited our temple in Pearland, you noticed a few changes around the property. Land was cleared, a new parking lot was completed, and construction on the pool around the big Buddha had begun. I am delighted to report that since then, construction has stepped up considerably. By next December, you won't even recognize the place!

The pool around the big Buddha has been finished, although the fountain is not yet ready for action. Several walkways circling and lead-

ing to the Buddha have also been added. During our last DTO class, we enjoyed our walking meditation around the Buddha for the first time.

Most exciting, however, is the progress on our new Buddha Hall. It was thrilling to watch the workers pour the foundation, install the steps, and create walkways connecting different areas of the temple. Now they are working on the framing. The workers are only available on weekends, but nevertheless, the building should be finished within a few months. As I write this, there is a flurry of construction activity taking place. These photographs are already obsolete.

We look forward to the time when we can welcome you all back to Dharma Spring to enjoy all of the improvements to the temple. The vision of our teacher is beginning to manifest, and this is only the beginning!



Virginia Beach Sangha Checking In by Georganne Fischer

The Dong Hung DTO has had an exciting winter so far. We recently completed the reading and discussion of Thich Nhat Hanh's *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. The group's sharing of feelings, concepts, and experiences made our time together insightful as well as lively.

And what a wonderful time to be involved with DTO! Now with over 40 members, we have taken seriously the advice of Master Thich Tri Hoang to begin a local prison program; at the end of this month, many of us are gearing up for our prison program orientation at a local correctional center in Chesapeake, Virginia. Once orientation is completed, we will begin planning our sessions with the inmates to discuss Buddhist dharma and share meditation techniques. Adjoining this outreach effort, some of our sangha members will also be engaging soon with the prison correspondence course. How great it is that we are putting the Buddha's wisdom in action!

But wait, there's more! If all this wasn't enough, between 10 to 15 members of our class members will travel up for the DTO Spring Retreat in New York at the beautiful Mariandale Retreat Center. We'll spend three days interacting with like-

minded friends who also will be gathered; being in the middle of nature, which is coming alive after a dormant winter, we'll take quiet walks, meditate, and listen to dharma talks given by the monks. All this is a delicious recipe for an much anticipated and inspiring getaway. Can life get any better!!! :)

Georganne Fischer

Thank you, Georganne!

Georganne is a new dharma student in the Virginia Beach Sangha. Welcome and thank you for your very interesting article.

Over 40 members, WOW!



"No way! It's definitely your turn to 'be one' with the dishes."

“Something to think about: We are very much like birds that have lived too long in a cage to which we return even when we get the chance to fly away. We have grown so accustomed to our faults that we can barely imagine what life would be like without them. The prospect of change makes us dizzy.”

– [Matthieu Ricard, Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill](#)

Musings From The CT Sangha by Michelle Härtel

This was a very busy and thought-provoking class year for the CT Sangha. We have all been joyfully plunging into the deep pool of the Dharma together while studying the various Sutras on our reading list. As we are traveling this path together, we all wanted to share some of the Dharma moments that most resonated with each of us from our teachings this year. Below is a short compilation of the glimmers of wisdom that remain shining in our minds as we continue to study and live the Dharma.

It is interesting to note, that upon receiving the various submissions from Sangha members, that almost all members submitted thoughts on Emptiness and/or Non-Self. It is true that we study as a group, but we also study as individuals. Our experiences as CT Sangha members and as individual students are hard to distinguish from one another, as if we are separate of Self and nothing more than collective consciousness. What a wonderful concept!

(Diamond Sutra)

Someone who looks for me in form
Or seeks me in sound
Is on a mistaken path
And cannot see the Tathagata.
The Diamond Sutra

All conditioned phenomena
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles or shadows;
Like drops of dew, or flashes of lightening;
Thusly should they be contemplated.

(The Diamond Sutra)

An age-old question of the Buddha – how are men to quiet their drifting minds and craving thoughts?

Answer: Give up clinging to arbitrary conceptions about phenomena. The mind becomes disturbed by these discriminations of sense concepts and as it does it falls into false imaginations of one self and its relation to others.

(Sutra of Hui Neng)

Our Body may be compared to the Bodhi-tree;
While our mind is a mirror bright.
Carefully we cleanse and watch them hour by hour,
And let no dust collect on them.

By no means is Bodhi a kind of tree,
Nor is the bright reflecting mind, a case of mirrors.
Since mind is emptiness,
Where can dust collect?

(Heart Sutra)

A new translation, by Thich Nhat Hanh, “The Other Shore” contains extra language to help prevent misunderstandings of the concept of Emptiness. The language of “no eyes, no ears, etc.” is intended to emphasize the lack of separate independent existence of these elements. So, there in fact eyes, ears, etc., they are just not separate self-entities. This insight of the emptiness of a separate self of all phenomena can help to bring us to the other shore.

Our concluding thought related to our class year so far is summed up perfectly in Vimalakirti’s explanation on how to enter the Dharma-Door of non-duality..

“

“!!

Respectfully Submitted by Your Friends on the Path,

The CT Sangha (Michelle Härtel)

Check out the DTO website, a work-in-progress as it’s still being developed, but lots of good info!! Here’s the link:

dharmateacherorder.org

The New York Sangha Spreads the Dharma Wings to Easton, PA by Dharma Priest Elena Bravocruz

Teaching the Dharma is one of the greatest privileges I enjoy in this life. I am so honored to speak the Words of the Buddha and watch them bloom in the lives of those with whom I share it that joy and thankfulness are continually renewed in my heart and mind.

In May 2017 Kim Ng of Easton, Pennsylvania invited me to teach the Dharma at her Healing Center. Not being familiar with the area, I took a leap of faith accepting her invitation and began to deliver Dharma talks and teach meditation in August. Kim is an entrepreneur and Buddhist devotee who founded Kim's Healing Center 21 years ago. Her faith in the Buddha motivated her to build a temple adjacent to her Traditional Chinese Medicine clinic with hopes that, someday; a monastic or lay teacher would come to offer spiritual healing for those whose physical ailments she endeavored to heal. For 21 years, her hopes were not fulfilled in spite of repeated invitations to various monks, nuns, and lay meditators.

Owing to our beloved founder Ven. Thich Tri Hong and my Buddhist studies with the DTO, I learned that nothing sprouts from itself; all phenomena are the result of causes and conditions, a ripening of Karma. This truth became wide-open by the way Kim and I met, during a Vipassana Retreat which was meant to be an exercise in "Noble Silence." In the midst of the silence, we communicated. She, watching me while I meditated in the meditation hall; me, watching her agitated in discomfort in the sleeping quarters. Thankfully, sharing the room throughout our stay gave us opportunity to have short conversations on the Dharma based on my recommended reading of the Four Noble Truths by Ven. Ajahn Sumedho, and in the end, we were both centered and mindfully just "washing the dishes" as Ven. Thich Nhat Hahn would say. By the closing day of the Retreat, she had invited me and I had accepted to go to Easton, Pennsylvania to teach the Dharma.

Our Sangha, the "Golden Lotus Dharma" meets at the Temple adjacent to Kim's Healing Center at 1223 Butler Street, Easton, Pennsylvania, every other Saturday, from 11 AM to 1 PM. There, we are patiently Building Mindful Compassion; sharing the Dharma in the precious words of the Buddha; and awakening resilience through Concentration and Mindfulness Meditation practices. The group, like everything else in the Universe, expands and contracts. At times, and depending on the weather, there could be 20 to 25 people; other times, fewer people show up. A core group of 10 to 12 lovely participants that are young, and not so young, families; couples, singles, and almost singles, of varying ages attend regularly. Culturally, the Easton community is quite diverse and that is also true to our Sangha. Up to now, the Dharma Talks and Meditation are in English however, Spanish delivery is an available option, too.

Our session begins with bows and incense offering to the Buddha, followed by a morning meditation. After this, a short Q&A opens a dialogue about the previous Dharma Talk and participants' sharing experiences and questions about their meditation practice and the reading. Then, I deliver the day's Dharma Talk where I introduce new Buddhist concepts, answer the questions and explain the reading content. This is followed by a Lovingkindness meditation session and we close with a sharing of the merits. At the end of each session participants share a light snack and tea.

Even though readings are not required, I have distributed copies of Ven. Ajahn Sumedho's *The Four Noble Truths*, and Ven. Bikkhu Bodhi's *The Noble Eightfold Path* to guide the Dharma Talks. Other generous fountains of wisdom and practice are my constant companions: Atisha and his *8 Verses*; Shantideva showing me *The Way of the Bodhisattva*; and Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh teachings in *Chanting From the Heart*.

Participation is open to anyone however, many learn about the Sangha through their connection with the Healing Center where they have found relief for their physical conditions. Maria Rojas, Manager of the Healing Center makes sure to invite the community and orchestrates the free light snack, sponsored by Kim and her husband David, at the end of the class.



Easton is approximately 95 miles away from me, and the trip can be rough and expensive however, when I hear reports on the benefits people have so far reaped from our Dharma practice, my heart flutters filled with joy; all doubts and fears dissipate into the Breath of Mindful Abiding. I am grateful.

If are interested or plan to visit Easton, Pennsylvania, please, by all means call Maria Rojas at 610-559-7280 and ask about the Saturday Meditation, she'll tell you all about it.

The Miami Sangha Gets a Facelift! by Susette Couso

The Miami Karuna Zen Center has moved! We also have a new website! We had been at our old center for a few years now. We've accomplished a lot here, done mindfulness days, Cine Zen, Tai Chi and many other activities. But now, alas, as life goes and everything changes, we are moving. We found a community partner that has opened a new martial arts school and has agreed to share the space with us. In this way, we will be paying less rent, but more importantly, we will be in a very central location, you may have heard of it if you've ever been in Miami: Calle Ocho!

We are happy and excited about the change because it means that we will be closer to the center of our metropolitan area and we will be able to service a larger part of our community. We inaugurated the center this Saturday, here is a picture of it before the arrival of our Saturday meditators.

We also have a new website: www.budismozenmiami.com. We are also joyful about this because it is a project that Noble Silence has tried to get completed for a while. We are trying to enhance our online presence with our Facebook page as well: Budismo Zen Miami.

With Noble's relentless leadership, we continue to try to evolve and open the doors to the Buddhist Dharma in our community to help alleviate suffering and bring about more joy. We hope to see all of you during the April retreat!

From the new website:

Enseñanza del Buda

El mundo no es tan concreto
como creéis...

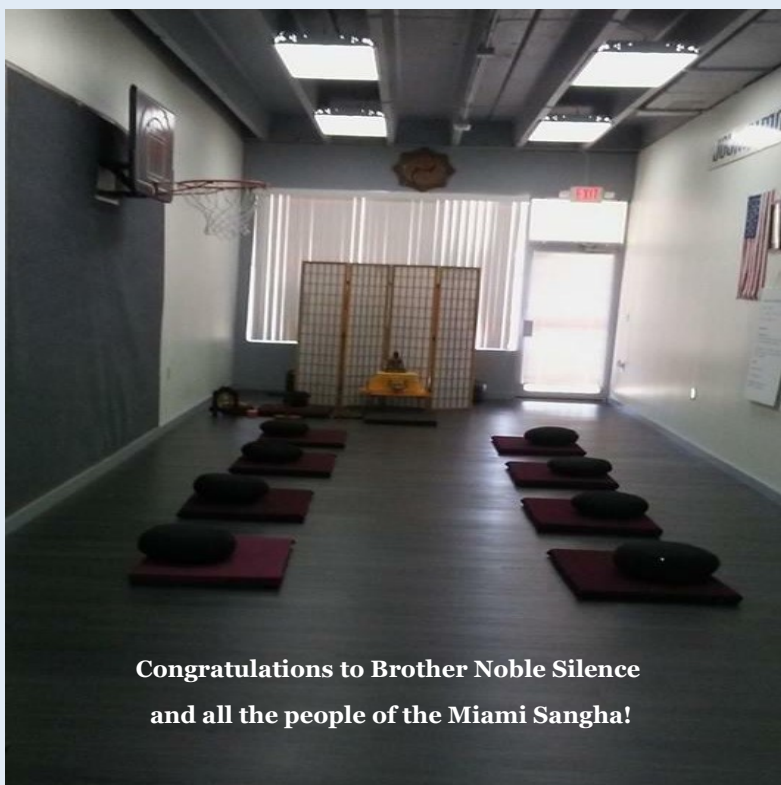
¿Porqué no analizáis detenidamente
eso que llamáis realidad y veis si
existe tal como pensáis?

Translation:

Teaching of the Buddha

The world is not as solid as you think,
Why don't you think deeply on what
you call reality?

See if what you call reality
Is truly what you think it is.



**Congratulations to Brother Noble Silence
and all the people of the Miami Sangha!**

“Searching for God in the 7 Cities: Buddhism”

A growing number of coastal Virginia residents are seeking spiritual nourishment from Buddhism. Here’s why:

<http://www.coastalvirginiamag.com/March-April-2018/Searching-for-God-in-the-7-Cities-Buddhism/>

Thank you to Dave Edmonds for this article. Too long for this newsletter but a must-read!

From the article: “Just as the great ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, so also this teaching and discipline has one taste, the taste of liberation.”
 ~ The Buddha

April 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Annual DTO retreat April 20-22 with a planning day for teachers (and others) on April 19.

See you all at Mariandale!

Schedules, room assignments and name tags will be provided at sign-in. We’re all in the same building this year and the kitchen staff is preparing vegetarian food only.

“Buddhist-Christian Dialogue” - This yearly series explores the many similarities between these two traditions. We will review many of the teachings of Jesus and the Buddha and discuss the way of the Saint and the way of the Bodhisattva.

Date & Time: Sat., June 16 from 10am to 2pm (includes hot lunch)

Presenter: Fernando Camacho

Please call Mariandale to register if you are interested in attending.

The telephone number is 914-941-4455.

Rev. Dr. Camacho will be teaching again in October at Mariandale. More information in the next newsletter.

