

BLUE LOTUS



BUDDHIST TEMPLE

THREE JEWELS FALL NEWS LETTER

BLUE LOTUS BUDDHIST TEMPLE



KISA GOTAMI

Bhante Samitha

During Buddha's period there was a young lady named Gothami. She had a thin body (she was skinny) and therefore she got the name "Kisa" and became known as Kisa Gothami. She was a very beautiful young lady. When she was eighteen years old, she married a young man. They were very happy and peaceful together and had a very enjoyable and comfortable life.

After two years, they had a child. It was a boy, and he was so cute. They had a good life with their newborn. They spent a lot of

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410 East Main Street, Barrington,
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time together as a family. The boy came to enjoy his parents and they could comfort their son.

One day they had a picnic. They were having fun, but suddenly their son got sick. They were very sad, and gave him some medicine to restore him, but the medicine did not work. His sickness became worse. As soon as they could, they came home and took him to the doctor. They did many things to restore his health, but they couldn't do it. Finally, their son died. They never expected such a thing for their son. So, Kisa Gothami didn't accept the death of her son. She was willing to do anything to restore her son. She took him in her arms and went out to ask for some medicine from other people. They told her that her son had already died, and now she couldn't do anything for him. But she didn't accept their advice. She went from person to person asking for some medicine to restore her dead son. Some people joked about her and some people thought that she had gone mad.

A wise man saw her pathetic condition and he thought to send her to the Buddha. He said, "Sister, there is a good doctor at Jethawana. He has the medicine that you are looking for. Go to him and ask for some medicine for your son." Then he guided her to the Buddha.

She was very happy, and she ran right away to meet the Buddha in Jethawana. She met the Buddha and put the dead body of her son in front of Him. Then she said, "I have heard that you are a good doctor in this world. So, please, give me some medicine to restore my son." The Buddha could understand everything at that moment, and he said to Gothami, "Ok, Sister, I'll help you. I can restore your son, but first I need some mustard seeds. Bring some of them to me."

This response made her very happy. Her face was bright. She said to the Buddha, "Ok, Doctor, I'll bring them right away."

Then the Buddha said to Gothami, "You have

Chrysa 224.595.0084
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Bodhi Prem Yoga

620 S. Arthur Avenue
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Benefits of Meditation

Reduce stress, anxiety & worry

**Cultivate loving, nurturing
relationships**

**Awaken to the blessings of the
present moment**

Learn to love yourself

Build self-esteem

**Reduce & eliminate self-doubt and
self-criticism**

**Reduce depression, grief and
alienation**

Enhance relationships with others

Enhance spirituality

Feel more centered and grounded

**Gain creative insights to perplexing
& challenging issues and
relationships**

Understand your life purpose

**Gain detachment from debilitating
habits**

to make sure that the mustard seeds are from a house where a death has never occurred," and she agreed with Buddha and left from Jethawana to find some mustard seeds.

She went house to house begging for some mustard seeds, but she couldn't find even one house where a death had not occurred. She ran around the whole village with her son, but there was not such a house as she was looking for.

Finally, she understood that she was not the only woman who had faced this situation. All people had faced the death of their relatives. Also, she understood that there were so many more people departed from this world than living people in this world. She thought every person's life ends in death. I'm not the only woman who has faced her child's death. So many mothers have faced that.

Finally she understood everything. She knew what had happened to her son and that she couldn't restore her son again.

While she was going to Jethawana to meet Buddha, she went to the cemetery and left her son there. She met the Buddha and told everything to Him.

She asked Buddha if she could be a nun. And Buddha agreed with her, and she became a nun named Kisa Gothami. She heard a good Dharma discourse and then she understood even more about impermanence.

One day she went to her room and lit lots of candles, and she sat down beside them and looked at them. She saw some of the candles' flames died a little bit later, some of them died after awhile, some of them died after a long time, and a few of them were lit until the candle was finished.

Then she understood all lives are the same as candle flames because some people die when they are born, some people die when they are children, some people die when they are

Tap an intuitive library of knowledge

Attain unshakable inner peace

Increase patience and empathy

Control bodily functions like heart rate and blood pressure

Increase energy, memory, concentration, creativity & productivity

Strengthen the immune system

Ease muscle pain

Cut health care costs dramatically

Retard the aging process

Reduce serum cholesterol levels and insomnia

Relieve anxiety, fatigue and phobias

Help weight loss

Speed post-operative recovery

Overcome addictions

Resolve marriage and family issues

Blue Lotus Buddhist Discussion Group at Borders Bookstore!

November 6th will be the first gathering of people interested in discussing Dr Walpola Rahula's book, "What the Buddha Taught". The meeting will be held every other Thursday at the Borders Bookstore on Northwest Hwy in Crystal Lake, at 7pm. Copies of the book will be held and are available for purchase up at the

young, some people die when they are old, and a few of them live their whole lives. She realized the truth of life seeing candle flames, and she meditated a long time. Finally, she reached enlightenment.

A New Meditation Recipe

Jim Kail

Recently, meditation has started to taste somewhat bitter to me. Heading to the cushion has the same old feeling as brushing my teeth or taking a vitamin pill, and I sit because it is "good" for me. In short, it has become a chore that lacks the taste of joy. After some experimenting, however, I developed the following improved recipe that I would like to share with you:

Amount	Ingredient
3 cups	Present
moment	
1 cup	Stillness
2/3 cup	Awareness
2 cups	Lightness with
ease	
1/2 cup	Playfulness
1/2 cup	Good humor
1 tsp.	Curiosity
1 tsp.	Awe
1 pinch	Self
discipline*	

*this is an essential ingredient but must be used sparingly

This recipe tastes much sweeter to me and has become a dessert to look forward to. It will be noted that the

register. All are welcome, so please come and bring your desire to talk about Buddhist principles in a casual setting.

You may contact Courtenay Wilson with comments or questions, either at chinacourt@sbcglobal.net or 815.479.0377. RSVP if possible, but it is not required. We sincerely hope to see you.

CONCEPTS

By Pramodha

"When one lives with concepts one never learns." ~Krishnamurti

Recently, many of us had the pleasure of meeting Bhante Sujatha's parents during their visit to Chicago. Some of the members of our group were also able to travel to Sri Lanka a few years ago with Bhante Sujatha. We host several Sri Lankan inspired fundraisers and cultural activities during the year as well. I have observed during these times that many members of our Sangha have made an effort to learn at least one simple greeting or phrase in Sinhalese to exchange with our Sri Lankan friends during these events. I thought this was a great way to welcome our new visitors.

Before meeting Bhante's parents, I went over the few greetings and

above recipe should not be followed exactly, but rather one should experiment with these and other wholesome ingredients to suit one's own taste.

My Practice

Courtenay Hill Wilson

The seed for my interest in Buddhism was planted by my parents, who raised me with values of compassion and non-harming but were careful to let me find my own "niche". It was cultivated by my doctor, who prescribed meditation as a supplement to my treatment for Bipolar Disorder. When I was given a tiny Buddha by a friend from India I began to read and study, eventually finding my way to Tuesday morning meditation with Bhante Sujatha.

My practice reminds me to approach all situations mindfully and with loving-kindness, encouraging me to include myself in that care. Being Bipolar means that I routinely suffer from depression and anxiety, and meditation allows me to "take the edge" off my symptoms and really see them for what they are, stopping them (usually) from spiraling out of control. It's like my meditation practice is a filter, separating the thoughts and feelings that I feel are generated by my brain chemicals, leaving behind what I see as my true nature. I don't think my practice is a "cure", but it has definitely helped me to come to terms and recognize my disorder, seeing clearly that it does

questions that I remembered how to translate into Sinhalese. One simple greeting that many of us have heard is "Kohomada?" This means "How are you?" I thought that this was a very suitable means of greeting Bhante's parents, and since it was only one word it was something that I was likely not to mess up at an inopportune moment. While I was clearing this greeting with Bhante Sujatha (and Bhante Sanyatha just to double check prior to possibly embarrassing myself), I suddenly thought of a potential problem. "I only know one answer to this question," I told them. "If the answer isn't 'hondai' (meaning good) then I won't know what they are saying." A rush of doubt flooded my mind. What if they are tired? Homesick? Annoyed at my attempt to speak Sinhalese with a bad American accent? I won't know how they're really doing or how to respond.

Those of you that have read past newsletter articles of mine will recognize my perfectionist tendency here as I automatically tried to put a face-saving spin on this dilemma. "What if we humans had no concept of 'bad' or 'negative' states?" This seemed like a very beneficial and logical thought pattern at the time. I was familiar with the notion that our thoughts, our mind-state, can impact our health and our life perspective. If we had no concept of "bad" how could life be

not define me.
I feel fortunate that my husband and the rest of my family encourages my studies, practice and involvement in Buddhism and the Blue Lotus Temple. We agree that it has enhanced my confidence and compassion. I am very grateful to Sujatha for being so supportive, and for allowing me to put the Blue Lotus Buddhist Discussion Group into effect. I try to remember all of these things when I am feeling down or anxious, and it helps me to become well, happy and peaceful.

BUDDHIST QUOTES AND SAYINGS

Let your love flow outward through
the universe,
To its height, its depth, its broad
extent,
A limitless love, without hatred or
enmity.
Then as you stand or walk,
Sit or lie down,
As long as you are awake,
Strive for this with a one-pointed
mind;
Your life will bring heaven to earth.
Sutta Nipata.

=====

Do not pursue the past.
Do not lose yourself in the future.
The past no longer is.
The future has not yet come.
Looking deeply at life as it is.
In the very here and now, the practitioner
dwells in stability and freedom.

anything but "good"? Then, on one August morning, I read my opening quote for this article on my desk calendar, and it seemed contrary to my notion. "Now what?" I thought. "How can I ever ask Bhante's parents how they are doing when my single-minded answer could limit our intellectual and spiritual growth?" In true scholastic overachiever spirit I went straight for the big, red Webster's to get the definition of concepts. The result of my research was not in my favor.

Concept - an idea or thought, esp. a generalized idea of a thing or class of things

Generalizations often lead to trouble. They keep us from the details, from the true understanding of the matter. My "hondai or bust" concept wasn't going to help me at all. For one thing, I wasn't going to learn any new Sinhalese words. That could be problematic, too. What if I visit Sri Lanka with only "hondai"? Maybe I am not "good" right then. Maybe I am car sick. Have to go to the bathroom...urgently. Can't find my English speaking tour guide. Yep, these things will definitely happen at least once...per day.

So, in all seriousness, life isn't always good and things aren't always as we expect them or wish them to be. Keep this in mind as we practice and meditate. We

We must be diligent today.
To wait until tomorrow is too late.
Death comes unexpectedly.
How can we bargain with it?
The sage calls a person who knows how to
dwell in mindfulness night and day,
'one who knows the better way to live alone.'
Bhaddekaratta Sutta.

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want to gain peace, health and happiness, but sometimes there is unrest, sickness and despair to go along with it. If we avoid generalizations about what is "good" and what is "bad", every moment is an opportunity to learn. We can try to understand our lives in a way we never have before. There is compassion to be found there for the human condition, for our collective suffering, and right in our other hand, a joy and wisdom that will lead to an ease and ultimate end to that suffering. Concepts can close the door to the cultivation of our minds.

My religion is to live and die without regret

Milarepa

**We are what we think.
All that we are arises with our thoughts.
With our thoughts, we make our world.**

Buddha

Thanksgiving Retreat

**Sunday November 23, 2008
9:00am to 4:00pm**

Small Waters Gathering Center

**15820 RT 173
Harvard IL 60033
Half Mile East of Alden Rd
Program**

8:30 am Gathering
9:00 am Gentle Yoga
10:00 am Tea and Coffee
10:15 Sitting Practice
11am Dharma Discussion
12:00 pm Sitting Practice
12:30 pm Lunch
1:15 Discussion on Thanksgiving and Gratitude as Daily Practice
2:00 Breathing & Metta Bhavana (Loving Kindness)
2:30 Tea and Dharma Discussion
3:30 Walking Meditation
4:00 Chanting, Thanksgiving, Sharing Love, Kindness and Closeness

**Cost: \$75.00
The retreat will be led by Bhante Sujatha**

**Vegetarian Lunch will be served to all members of the Retreat.
Registration is required in advance; space is limited to 25 people**

Retreat Registration Instructions - Preregistration for this retreat is required Due to space limitations all registrations must be received by Nov 16, 2008..

**Mail registration and your check to
Blue Lotus
520 Devonshire Lane #8
Crystal Lake IL 60014**

To sign up, call -Blue Lotus Temple 815-444-8915 or

E mail at mail@bluelotustemple.org

Visit our web site at www.bluelotustemple.org

A Joyful Christmas Retreat

Christmas the way it's supposed to be
A morning of joyous community and communion

Saturday December 13, 2008
9:00 a.m. to noon

Small Waters Gathering Center
15820 Illinois Route 173
Harvard, IL 60033
Half-mile East of Alden Road
815-648-1372

Program

8:30 a.m. Gathering

9:00 a.m. Gentle Yoga

10:00 a.m. Tea and Coffee

10:15 a.m. Sitting Practice

11:00 a.m. Dharma Discussion - Christmas the way it's supposed to be

12:00 p.m. Chanting, Sharing Love, Kindness and Closeness

Registration Fee: \$40.00

The retreat will be led by Bhante Sujatha

Vegetarian Box lunch will be served to all members of the Retreat.

Please note: Preregistration for this retreat is required.
Due to space limitations all registrations must be received by Sunday
Dec. 07, 2008.

Mail registration and your check to:

Blue Lotus

520 Devonshire Lane #8

Crystal Lake IL 60014

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To sign up, call -Blue Lotus Temple [815-444-8915](tel:815-444-8915) or
mail@bluelotustemple.org

Visit our web site at www.bluelotustemple.org

A Word About Our Precepts Ceremony

Bhihhuni Vimala

The Blue Lotus Temple summer began with the Annual Precepts Ceremony on June 19. After the ceremony, a luncheon was held to honor Bhante Sujatha's parents, visiting from Sri Lanka. Hosting the event was also Bhante's way to celebrate his birthday. At his request, dana offerings made during the delicious feast were donated to purchase medical equipment for a Sri Lankan hospital.

The Precepts Ceremony took place on the stage area of the church, with the altar adorned with beautiful roses. As ordinants (those taking vows) and monks came into the room and bowed before the Buddha, they added bouquets of garden flowers to the altar scene, creating a memorable setting for a moving ceremony.

The vows taken by laypeople included the Three Refuges, the first commitment to the Triple Gem; the Five Precepts, commitment to a universal code of ethics; and the Eight Lifetime Precepts, adding a more subtle level to our understanding of mindful behavior.

This year the ceremony was led by Bhante Sujatha, as in previous years, but he was joined by 5 other monastics who helped guide the service, which included recitation of the precepts in both English and Pali. The monastics from Blue Lotus Temple included Bhante Sanyatta and Bhante Samita, as well as Bhikkhuni Vimala. Guest monks were Bhante Punna and Bhante Bodhi, who also presented a dharma talk. Two other special guests were Swarna Wickremeratne and her husband. Swarna is the author of *Buddha in Sri Lanka, Remembered Yesterdays*.

The ceremony was moving and memorable for each of the ordinants and the audience of noble friends and family. It was an opportunity for everyone to remember and renew their own personal commitments to living a full, meaningful life. "We are living in the Three Worlds, which is like staying in a house on fire," Bhante Sujatha reminded every person at the ceremony, and the Triple Gem offers an escape from the suffering of those worlds.

The five precepts:

You are not to kill any living thing.

You are not to take anything which does not belong to you.

You are not to commit sexual misconduct.

You are not to say anything which will harm others.
You are not to take intoxicants."

The Eight Lifetime Precepts:

1. Abstain from killing
2. Abstain from stealing
3. Abstain from sexual misconduct
4. Abstain from false speech
5. Abstain from malicious speech
6. Abstain from harsh speech
7. Abstain from useless speech
8. Abstain from engaging in wrong livelihood and drinks and drugs causing heedlessness

Blessing for 2008

Hosted by

Blue Lotus Buddhist Temple

Evoke blessings and bring a happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year

December 06, 2008

4:00pm - 6:00pm

Congregational Unitarian Church

221 Dean Street, Woodstock, Illinois 60098

Ten monks from different states will participate and do the chanting and blessings

We cordially invite you to come and join with us and have a peaceful experience

Free snack after the program

Your goodwill contributions are accepted

Always Here

Gregory T. Rajskey

Most of us set foot upon a spiritual path when we began searching for an elusive truth, when we embarked on some vague, ill-defined quest to obtain answers to questions that we couldn't even articulate. Perhaps we sought to

reach a transcendent state that somehow would connect us to the Source of our being. We thought of ourselves as *seekers*, even though we might not have known what it was we were seeking.

The trouble with thinking of oneself as a seeker is that it implies that something is missing, lost, or incomplete. I had a lesson recently that helped me to understand that.

~~~\*~~~\*~~~

Late this past summer I took a canoe trip on the Wisconsin River with a couple of friends. We were fortunate to be blessed with ideal weather that featured mild temperatures under nearly cloudless skies. After a day of paddling, and exploring some of the sandy islands dotting this stretch of river, we set up camp on the north shore of one such island, with the river flowing past us, soft sand beneath us, and a cluster of trees behind us. We pitched a tent, gathered firewood, and settled in for the evening, drumming around the fire.

After a time, I stood up, stretched, and walked to the river's edge. There were no lights along the shore, no other camp sites within view, and no moon that night. Behind the cloudless sky, the stars were displayed in vivid numbers that took my breath away.

Stars! What stars! Now, I have been to wilderness areas; I have seen the stars at night away from city lights. But I am reluctant to admit that it had been a while. And the stars that night were so bright, so numerous, that they induced in me a physical sensation not unlike being kicked in the chest. I staggered under the immensity of the experience.

It slowly dawned on me, in the most comforting and reassuring way, that the stars are *always there*. Day and night, whether obscured by clouds, masked by daylight, or veiled by the insidious artificial light of our modern civilization, the stars are always there, shining just as brightly, in just the same numbers and configurations. They are constant.

It is only our limited perception that causes us to forget them.

And so it is with our spiritual quest. The elusive truth or transcendent state that we seek is *always here* *Tat Tvam Asi*, generally translated as *Thou art that*. It is indeed comforting to know that we need look no further than within ourselves. The goal of our quest is to fully realize that we already

have arrived.

## Maternity Ward Project



As you know, last July 19 we did our annual precept taking ceremony and also we celebrated Bhante Sujatha's Birthday. That day you all contributed a gift for Bhante's birthday. His Birthday theme was "Helping the Sick." Bhante contributed all of the gift donations to the Maternity Ward Project of Dr. Nawaz Jiffry V.O.G., to uplift the Maternity Ward of the Mawanella based hospital in Sri Lanka. This ward provides quality service to the patients in and around Mawanella and also trains doctors, medical students and all categories of health workers.