Meditation group aims to relieve stress, bring about true happiness

Aliya Collins

Thursday, October 6, 2005

Junior Dan Johnson has been interested in Buddhism for several years. He realized at a young age that he did not believe in Christianity, but it was not until six years ago that he realized what he truly believed.

“Two years ago, I read a book about meditation and I started contemplating the nature of happiness,” he said. “I realized that, in Buddhism, the most profound moments are the ones we have with others.”

Marc Rice, associate professor of music, meditates during one of the meetings of Kirksville Dharma. Rice said that after contemplating the true nature of happiness, he realized the most profound moments are the ones he had with others.

Rice said he began reading different books and realized that all different paths lead to a similar destination, whatever you call it. Later, when he converted, he realized the beauty of meditation. In Buddhism, he said, the teacher, or called Buddha, teaches. Rice said, “There is no named Buddha in the Bible. In Buddhism, there is no Jesus. We are always changing in body and soul, and Buddhism recognizes that,” he said.

Similar to Christianity’s Ten Commandments, Buddhism believes the Four Noble Truths to be a restriction because of self-control, meditation, and the idea that breaking free from dissatisfaction is to open up to all beings. The final truths are to be used as a vehicle for your own peace, Rice said.

Buddhism has the Four Noble Truths, but unlike Christianity, no one is expected to lose their personal identity, he said. “This is the third generation of believers, and there are typically four to 10 people at the meetings,” Rice said. There is no monetary cost. Rather, the interior pay in what is called Dana.

“Buddhists pay in what is called Dana. There is no monetary cost. Rather, the attention is given to the teacher,” he said. “I understand that it is just a reality, and I try to live at peace with it.”

“Personal belief systems can be challenged at the meetings because what the Buddha taught was not based on any religious text, but rather on individuals’ experiences,” he said. “I had some ideas about what Buddhism meant to me, and I realized that the path was not one you normally wouldn’t do something about and I simply trusted in it.”

“Buddhism has become a popular choice of religion for those who are seeking answers other than the ones provided by Christianity,” he said. “I had some ideas about what Buddhism meant to me, and I realized that the path was not one you normally wouldn’t do something about and I simply trusted in it.”

Rice said that once individuals are able to let go of the ego, they can overcome the feelings of guilt, anger and shame and, at the same time, have the benefits of an active member of Rice’s group. In particular, he said meditation has produced feelings of joy, increased vitality, courage, wisdom and compassion.

“Personal belief systems can be challenged at the meetings because what the Buddha taught was not based on any religious text, but rather on individuals’ experiences,” he said. “I had some ideas about what Buddhism meant to me, and I realized that the path was not one you normally wouldn’t do something about and I simply trusted in it.”