



Reflecting On Our Moral Landscape

by Shujo Brent Derowitsch

This year I have been working as a chaplain resident at Fairview Southdale Hospital, offering spiritual care to patients and their families in intensive care, oncology and post-surgery units. The program I am in, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), includes weekly meetings with four other resident chaplains and a CPE supervisor for continuing education and self reflection. A significant part of the program centers on reflection, which includes writing papers and engaging in discussions about our internal journeys as spiritual care providers

One of the reflection papers we were asked to write was on the “moral landscape” of our lives. Who and what were the people, events, and environments that influenced our moral development? Contemplating, writing and talking about this was a powerful experience for me. I would like to share some of my reflections on the moral landscape in which I grew up.

My earliest memories of the larger world were nightmare images of the Vietnam War that came through the television into my grandparent’s living room. I remember seeing an American soldier drinking poison so he would not have to kill anymore, and Vietnamese monks immolating themselves in order to bring the world’s attention to the suffering of the Vietnamese. A second-grade classmate brought to school the newspaper photo of the Vietnamese girl running down a country road naked and crying, covered in napalm.

My parents divorced, and my father was drafted into the Army. A year and a half later he returned home from Vietnam, broken. At the sound of an airplane he would dive under a table. For several years he disappeared, living on the streets of Seattle. My mother worked in restaurants and remarried a man who was a union truck driver. We lived in an industrial neighborhood of Niagara Falls, New York, having moved across the country from Kansas. I remember how hard they worked—not only for basic necessities but also for the things I enjoyed, such as books, bicycles and art supplies. Later I learned that they also paid child support for my stepfather’s two children. I remember scary times when my stepfather’s union would strike and there was little money. Seven years into their marriage, my mother divorced my stepfather when he became involved with another woman. As a single mother she continued to work and provide for me.



Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial, Washington DC

This was the gray moral landscape of my childhood, in which I became sensitive to the horrors of war and the day-to-day injustices experienced by women and laborers. Throughout my mother’s struggles she did her best to provide for me. She often talked to me about the values of honesty, responsibility, loyalty and respect. I saw the effort she made to live out these values in her own life. My parents and grandparents struggled with anger, abuse, and alcoholism, and yet they took responsibility for providing for their families and encouraged their children to pursue their goals.

Growing up gay helped me become sensitive to the prejudice that people can experience. I was tormented in elementary school by classmates, and was told by my church that God’s punishment for homosexuals was eternal hell. I have been ridiculed and threatened with violence in public, surrounded by witnesses who remained silent. I was kicked out of seminary-college because I was too vocal about being gay. Now, as an adult in a same-sex committed partnership, I do not receive the same economic privileges or legal protections as heterosexual couples. It has been a life-long journey for me to come to realize that my sexuality is a gift to me as well as others.

Doing this reflection exercise has helped me appreciate how recognizing one’s moral influences helps us understand the strengths and challenges of our ethical perspective and practice. With such an understanding we can become more intentional about our thoughts, words and actions in our relationships. This can help us develop everyday practices that contribute to the wellbeing of others and ourselves.

continued on page 2

Are We Born to Be Good?

A review of the book *Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life* by Dacher Keltner

by Bobbie Fredsall

At the most fundamental level our nature is compassionate, and that cooperation, not conflict, lies at the heart of the basic principles that govern our human existence.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

When we think of evolution, we might think of the phrase “survival of the fittest.” But both Charles Darwin and recent research support the thesis that “survival of the kindest” was probably more important for the successful evolution of our species.

In *Born to Be Good*, Dacher Keltner, professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley and director for the Greater Good Science Center, describes the research on emotions that support the thesis that evolution resulted in cooperative and caring humans. This research finds a physical basis for positive emotions such as love and compassion. Supporting evidence for the thesis from studies of our close primate relatives, archeology, and hunter-gatherer cultures is also discussed.

Darwin believed that our emotions are expressed by movements in our bodies, primarily in our faces. He was also convinced that the expression of emotions was universal. The details of his observations and other support for these beliefs were described in Darwin’s book *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.

Darwin’s views were in stark contrast to the views of human nature and human emotions held by many of the major figures in the Western intellectual tradition. The prevailing view of human nature, motivations, and emotions in Darwin’s time was definitely more negative. In the 1960’s the reigning view of emotions was the social constructivist view, the idea that emotions are culturally specific, arising from values, institutions, and social practices.

Psychologist Paul Ekman traveled to Papua New Guinea to test this view with a hunter-gatherer tribe who had had no contact with Western civilization. People in this tribe were expected to have a very different experience of emotions than people in the United States. Ekman’s study showed that members of this tribe recognized the same emotions in pictures of people that Westerners did. Ekman was shouted down when he presented these results at a meeting in the United States. This response led Ekman and colleagues to begin a long effort to prove the universality of our expression of emotions by studying the muscles in our faces and how we use them to express emotions. The complex system they developed can be used to determine the emotions being expressed by an individual, live or in a picture, providing a tool that can be used by anyone studying emotions.

Ekman’s tool for categorizing facial expressions along with the methods of modern brain research have allowed researchers, including Keltner, to tie specific emotions to physical actions and effects in the body. Keltner describes this research in

chapters devoted to specific emotions and actions that elicit emotions such as smiles, laughter, and touch.

One particularly interesting chapter in this book discusses compassion and its biological basis. Darwin argued for the greater strength of the social or maternal instincts over any other. He thought sympathy was our strongest emotion. He argued that our hominid ancestors in communities of more sympathetic individuals were more successful in raising offspring that would survive and reproduce. New studies support Darwin. Compassion is a biologically based emotion, most likely present because of the selection pressure to care for the vulnerable. The research described here connects our feelings of compassion to the vagus nerve which runs through the body from the base of the spine, past the heart, to lower organs. When we feel compassion in our chest, it may be the result of the vagus nerve, not our heart.

Born to Be Good is a fascinating book. The research presented provides a biological basis for positive emotions such as love and compassion and demonstrates how these emotions lead to caring and cooperative behavior.

Reflecting On Our Moral Landscape

continued from page 1

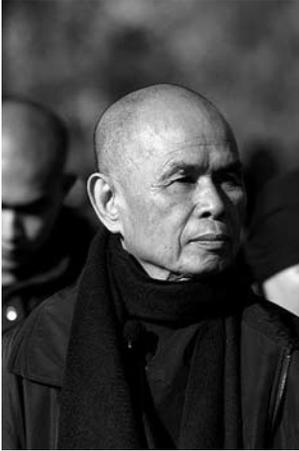
Thich Nhat Hanh says, *In the way that a gardener knows how to transform compost into flowers, we can learn the art of transforming anger, depression, and racial discrimination into love and understanding.* This is how I want to use the injustices I have witnessed and experienced. Knowing the pain of not being treated fairly, I want to uphold the rights, autonomy and dignity of the patients I see in the hospital. I attempt to do this in small but intentional ways: I knock before entering patients’ rooms, I ask patients how they want to be addressed and whether it is a good time for a visit. I also work to uphold the rights and dignity of patients in larger ways. I attempt to understand and respect the culture and religion of patients. If a patient tells me his or her rights were infringed, I make it known to the nursing staff or to the patient representative. If the patient’s voice is not being heard, I advocate for him or her to the medical team.

Doing this exercise has been valuable for me. I recommend reflecting on the moral landscape of your own life in order to develop your awareness of how that landscape influences your ethical understanding and the choices you make in your everyday life.



Fall Programs 2009

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
3206 Holmes Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 825-7658
www.oceandharma.org



The Wonderful Teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh

*A course of study and practice based on the teachings
of the world-renowned mindfulness teacher*

Taught by Joen Snyder O'Neal

Our true home is in the present moment. To live in the present moment is a miracle....The miracle is to walk on the green Earth in the present moment, to appreciate the peace and beauty that are available now. Peace is all around us—in the world and in nature—and within us—in our bodies and our spirits. Once we learn to touch this peace, we will be healed and transformed. It is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of practice.

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Touching Peace*

The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh is one of the most influential teachers of mindfulness alive today. Now 82, he has been active his entire life in presenting ways of engaging with the challenges of our lives and our world that are profound, inspiring, and accessible to everyone. His example and teachings have greatly impacted the development of Compassionate Ocean, its members, and its teachers.

Joen first met Thich Nhat Hanh in 1982 here in Minneapolis. Since then she has studied with him and his community on numerous occasions, including two extended retreats at his community at Plum Village, France, as well as at several retreats in the United States.

Each class will include sitting meditation; a talk based on readings from the course text, *The Essential Teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh*; small group discussions; and practices and songs from Plum Village. The text will be available at the first class.

**Minneapolis (#B40)
Wednesdays, September 23 - November 11 (eight classes)
7:00-9:00 P.M.**

Casket Arts Building, Suite 210
681 17th Ave. NE
(in the Northeast Arts District of Minneapolis)
Fee: \$150 (members \$140) + \$20 materials fee

Total Dynamic Living - Introductory Program in Mindfulness

Total Dynamic Living is a thorough, well-structured introduction to mindfulness practice in everyday life. It follows the nationally acclaimed mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) model developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, presenting mindfulness as a universal practice for people of any (or no) religious background.

The program includes instruction and practice in sitting meditation, gentle yoga, body awareness meditation, and daily-life applications of mindfulness. It also includes information about stress and relaxation. The program enables participants to develop their own base in mindfulness practice integrated into everyday life.

The course includes eight weekly classes, an individual interview with the instructor, a Saturday retreat, the book *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn, two CDs, and handouts. 27 CEUs are available for all courses.

The course fee is \$295 plus a \$35 materials fee. Payment plans and some scholarship aid are available. Please contact the Center to discuss.

Enrollment is limited, and pre-registration is required. Please let your friends and colleagues know about this program.

#169 Minneapolis: Tuesdays

September 22 – November 10 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Joen Snyder O'Neal

Location: Three Smooth Stones, 3336 E. 25th St., Minneapolis (near I-94 & the Riverside exit)

#248 St. Paul: Thursdays

September 24 – November 12 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Michael O'Neal

Location: Clouds in Water Zen Center, 308 Prince St., St. Paul (near I-94 & the 7th St. exit)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

This retreat is open to all current participants in Total Dynamic Living courses. It is also open to graduates of past Total Dynamic Living courses on a donation basis. People not enrolled in a current course should call the Center in advance to reserve a space.

Saturday, October 31, 2009, 8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

Location: First Unitarian Society, 900 Mt. Curve, Minneapolis

Dislocated Workers Practice Mindfulness

This summer Compassionate Ocean donated a mindfulness class to 16 dislocated workers. Joen and Kaia Svien taught the class at Three Smooth Stones. The space was donated by Bob Modaff. Jesse Helle-Morrissey assisted. These participants were all professionals who have lost their jobs because of the recession. Everyone in the class was very happy to practice sitting, walking, and lying down meditation, sharing a time of breathing and "just being" together in the middle of the stress of not being employed and looking for a job in the current market.

If anyone knows of positions for senior marketing managers, an architect (designed part of the China Olympics), a buyer/purchasing agent, a career counselor, a software engineer, or help with accounting and bookkeeping, please contact the Center and we will refer you to a mindful one of the above.

Sangha Gatherings

The Compassionate Ocean Sangha is a group practicing in the Buddhist mindfulness traditions of Soto Zen and Thich Nhat Hanh. Throughout the year the sangha (community) has weekly gatherings that include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks and discussions, mindful movement, chanting and singing, and other spiritual practices. Dharma talks focus on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life. Everyone is invited to participate in our sangha gatherings. There are no prerequisites to participate, and people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome.

There are two weekly gatherings of the Compassionate Ocean Sangha. The Sunday group is co-led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal. Joen leads the Friday group. There is also a meditation session offered on Wednesday mornings.

Sunday Gathering: Sundays, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Schedule: 9:00 sitting, 9:25 walking, 9:35 sitting, 10:00 dharma talk and discussion, 11:15 ending.

***Note:** Sunday gatherings will resume Sept. 13 after our August break. **Note new location.**

Friday Gathering: Fridays, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Schedule: 9:30 sitting, 10:00 dharma talk and discussion, 11:00 ending.

***Note:** Friday gatherings will resume Sept. 11 after our August break. **Note new location.**

Wednesday Morning Meditation: 6:30-7:50 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Schedule: 6:30-7:30 sitting, with a bell at 7:00 for stretching or standing, 7:30 chanting service.

Note new location starting Sept. 16.

Open Houses

New people are always welcome at sangha gatherings. To provide a special welcome, open houses that included an orientation to our practice are offered several times a year. These are excellent opportunities to find out more about sangha gatherings if you are curious but haven't quite got around to coming.

Friday, September 18, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Sunday, September 20, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Sangha Retreats

These retreats are open to community members as well as others who have had some experience with Buddhist practice and meditation. Each retreat offers an extended opportunity to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. Activities include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, individual meetings with the teachers, formal oryoki meals, work practice, and service assignments. These retreats are excellent opportunities to strengthen and deepen the practice of presence, including benefiting from the support of others.

Three-day Retreat at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community

Friday, Sept. 4, 7:00 P.M. – Monday, Sept. 7, 2:00 P.M.

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal, with resident priest Dokai Georgeson
Fee due in advance: \$175 (members \$150)

One-day (overnight) Retreat

Friday, Oct. 16, 7:00 P.M. – Saturday, Oct. 17, 5:00 P.M.

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal
Fee: \$40 (members \$30), includes meals
Clouds in Water Zen Center, 308 Prince St., St. Paul

Seven-day (Rohatsu) Retreat

Tuesday, Dec. 1, – Tuesday, Dec. 8

This retreat will be held jointly with Clouds in Water Zen Center and will be led by Joen Snyder O'Neal, Michael O'Neal, and Byakuren Judith Ragir, Guiding Teacher of Clouds in Water. For information on registration and fees, please go online to the Clouds in Water website, www.cloudsinwater.org.

Teachers

Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal are the guiding teachers of the Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center.

They practiced and taught for many years at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and Hokyō-ji Zen Monastery under the guidance of Dainin Katagiri Roshi. They have also practiced with Thich Nhat Hanh in France and the United States, and have completed a training for professionals with Jon Kabat-Zinn. Joen was ordained as a Zen priest by Katagiri Roshi in 1980 and received Dharma transmission from him in 1989.



Membership

You are invited to become a member of the Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center. Membership is a way to support the programs of the Center, and is encouraged for those who participate regularly as well as those who simply would like to help make possible the continued life of the Center. A membership brochure is available at sangha gatherings or can be sent out by mail; please call if interested.

Fall 2009 Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Email _____

Phone

H: () _____

W: () _____

To register, please check the appropriate activities.

Total Dynamic Living - Introductory Program in Mindfulness (\$25 deposit)

- Minneapolis, Tuesday evenings (#169)
- St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#248)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

- Saturday, October 31, 8:30 A.M.– 2:30 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

The Wonderful Teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh

- Minneapolis, Wednesday evenings (#B40)

The Genjo Koan Seminar

- Minneapolis, Monday evenings (#B41)

Retreat at Hokyoji

- September 4-7
(enclose payment \$175, members \$150)

One-Day (overnight) Retreat

- October 16 - 17
(enclose payment of \$40, members \$30)

Sangha Gatherings

No advance registration is necessary for the sangha gatherings. Call for directions.

Enrollment for these activities is limited, and early registration is encouraged.

Please call if you have any questions.
To register, send this form along with the non-refundable deposit listed (payable to CODC) to:

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
3206 Holmes Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 825-7658 • www.oceandharma.org

Our Financial Condition

Like many nonprofit organizations and businesses, the Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center is experiencing reduced income from donations and classes. Our income is \$21,000 less than at this time a year ago on an annual budget of \$133,000. We have cut expenses on our already lean budget as much as possible without impairing the Center's ability to carry out its programming. Please help support the Center by encouraging participation in our fall programs, attending the Gala & Silent Auction on Nov. 7, and considering a donation to our Autumn Appeal. Any special donations at this time would be very helpful and much appreciated.

– Bobbie Fredsall and Jim Moore, Finance Committee

Study Seminar: The *Genjo Koan* of Eihei Dogen

Those who have great realization of delusion are buddhas; those who are greatly deluded about realization are ordinary beings.

– Genjo Koan

This fall a study seminar will be offered on Zen Master Dogen's poetic and pivotal essay, *Genjo Koan*. Various translated as "the koan of everyday life" or "the issue at hand," this work is the first chapter in Dogen-zenji's masterwork, *Shobogenzo*. John Daido Looi describes it in this way: "[it] examines our everyday life as a way of boundless clarity, pointing out that the very barriers hindering us are the gates leading us to freedom."

The seminar will be led by Joen Snyder O'Neal, Sosan Flynn, and Shujo Derowitsch, with commentary by Michael O'Neal. The course is appropriate for those who have done some formal Buddhist study already.

Minneapolis (#B41)

Mondays, Sept. 28 - Nov. 16, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

#210 Casket Arts Building

681 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis

Fee: \$150 (members, \$140), plus \$20 materials fee



Deep Appreciation...

...to all who supported the Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center in the past fifteen months by making a financial contribution. A dharma center only exists through the generous support of many beings. The following people, foundations, and organizations made donations, either through membership pledges, year-end contributions, building fund support, designated giving, or general contributions. Heartfelt thanks go to all.

We Are Moving...

This fall all sangha meetings and Buddhist studies classes will be held in Northeast Minneapolis, in the Casket Arts Building across the street from our building on the corner of 17th and Jefferson Street. The address of the Casket Arts Building is 681 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413. The entrance is mid-block on 17th Avenue.

The Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center has an office in the Casket Arts Building in Suite 210, and we will be meeting there. The Total Dynamic Living mindfulness-based stress reduction classes will still be held at Three Smooth Stones and Clouds in Water Zen Center.

DIRECTIONS:

From Broadway St. NE, turn north on Monroe St. NE and go to 17th Ave. NE.

Turn left and go one block to the Casket Arts Building.

From Central Ave. NE or Johnson St. NE, turn west onto 18th Ave. NE, go to Monroe St. NE.

Turn left onto Monroe, go under the train tracks, and turn right onto 17th Ave. NE.

Go one block to the Casket Arts Building.

Call 612-781-7640 for directions if you need help.



Compassionate Ocean Dharma
Center
3206 Holmes Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 825-7658
meditate@oceandharma.org
www.oceandharma.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 30308
Minneapolis, MN

Fall Program Highlights

- Introductory Programs in Mindfulness offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Buddhist Studies course: "The Wonderful Teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh" taught by Joen Snyder O'Neal
- Seminar on Genjo Koan with Joen Snyder O'Neal, Sosan Flynn, Shujo Derowitsch, and Michael O'Neal
- Retreats at Hokyoji and Clouds in Water Zen Center
- Gaté Gaté Gala and Silent Auction on November 7th

We Are Moving!

As work continues on the building we are renovating in northeast Minneapolis (see photos below), we are moving all sangha gatherings and Buddhist studies classes to our office space in the Casket Arts building across the street. See page 7 for details.

