



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

A Center for Mindful Living

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Breathe Gently

Joen O'Neal

Editor's note: This article was originally published in the Fall 1997 issue of the newsletter of the Center for Mindful Living, which, in the year 2000, became what is now Compassionate Ocean Zen Center. Plum Village is the home community of Thich Nhat Hanh in southern France, where Joen and Michael practiced for a month in the summer of 1996. Thay, meaning "teacher," is how he is usually referred to in his community. Tozan is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Zen.

In speaking of the present moment in his poem, *Our True Heritage*, Thich Nhat Hanh says,

*It needs you to breathe gently
for the miracles to be displayed.
Suddenly you hear the birds singing,
the pines chanting,
see the flowers blooming,
the blue sky,
the white clouds,
the smile and the marvelous look
of your beloved.*

Many times, walking amidst the beauty of nature, I have been aware of a seeming veil between me and the trees, flowers, and the birds' song. And since I'm a person who has been wholeheartedly (and stumblingly) involved in the process of waking up for a long time, it's a shock to me, and a grief, when I am unable to *really* see, to *really* feel, to receive the embrace of the world around me.

Last summer at Plum Village was transforming for me. Because of the depth and incredible softness of Thay's practice and the mandala of practice around him, I was able to eat and digest the instruction to *breathe gently*.

The Buddha, in one section of the *Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing*, says that when the practitioner breathes, she might say to herself, "Breathing in, I know I am breathing in, and I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out, and I am aware of my whole body."

The Chinese monk Tozan, grieving after the death

of his teacher, was enlightened as he was crossing a stream, and said, "Today I am walking alone, yet everywhere I meet him. He is no other than myself, yet I am not he."

When Tozan was crossing the stream, he breathed gently. And when he breathed gently, he was aware of his whole body. And when he looked deeply, he saw the miracles displayed—suddenly, he saw that his whole body was so deep and vast, including birds singing, pines chanting, the smile and the marvelous look of his beloved, that he exclaimed, "He is no other than myself!"

For Tozan, all the veils disappeared. For us too, the veils can fall away when we breathe gently. Every day for the past two months, I have walked out into the lushness of our Minnesota summer. This particular summer seems the most marvelous to me, because I have remembered to breathe gently, and I have been able to see, hear, and receive the gems "shining through and containing earth and sky, water and clouds." Even in the midst of the tangles of my samsaric life, if I remember to breathe gently, I can hear the pines and everything else—even the tangles—chanting. My teacher Dainin Katagiri-roshi referred to this as *total dynamic working*.

So Tozan said, "He is no other than myself, but I am not he." "I am not he" means that even in the midst of knowing ourselves as part of the vast net of interbeing, we have to take responsibility for our own individual lives and take the next step. How do we responsibly take the next step? Thich Nhat Hanh gives us this good advice: *Breathe gently*.

2017 Year–End Appeal

The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Dear Friend,

As someone connected to Compassionate Ocean Zen Center, you have been supported in becoming more open to the joy and happiness available in the present moment. As a friend and most likely a graduate of one of our programs, your seeds of mindfulness and kindness have been watered and strengthened. Through the guidance of our teachers, you have found exceptional encouragement on your journey of awakening and wholeness. I am confident of all of this.

Compassionate Ocean is about to begin its 24th year. In that time we have directly touched the lives of many hundreds of people, and they—we—have extended this circle of influence ever wider. **This is the purpose of Compassionate Ocean—to be a vital, thriving center for awakening and peace in the heart of northeast Minneapolis.**

Our intention in 2018 is to carry this mission forward—by deepening participation in our Center and extending the Center’s gifts to the larger community. We’ll continue our meditation sessions and dharma talks, our classes and retreats. We’ll continue our climate change programming. We plan to build on our arts programming by hosting two first-class music performances, one classical and one contemporary. We also plan to strengthen our community outreach by improving our online presence and other communications.

With the support of members and friends, we can do all of this. Like other small nonprofit organizations, we face strong financial pressures. For the past three years, despite having a very lean budget, we have had small but unsustainable deficits. A major accomplishment this past year has been to improve our Guiding Teachers’ housing situation, from an attic in St. Paul to an apartment just down the street from the Center—a long-time aspiration. The move will help Joen and Michael be more present and active. But as you might expect, it increases the Center’s housing expense by several thousand dollars a year.

Compassionate Ocean depends on the generosity of people like you and me. The income from classes and other programs covers about 40% of our Center’s operating expenses. These fees are kept low to make our Center accessible. The rest of our income comes from contributions from people like us who value what the Center does and want it to grow and thrive. Historically we’ve received about \$12,000 through our Year-End Appeal. However, all things considered, **this year the Center needs to raise at least \$20,000.** This Year-End Appeal is our chance to end 2017 in a positive financial position. **Will you help?**

Your tax-deductible donation can be mailed in the enclosed return envelope. Please include any ideas you have for the future development of our Center. You can also contribute online at our website, OceanDharma.org (see the “Membership and Donations” tab).

Yours in gratitude,

Jan Sutton

Jan Sutton
Chair, Board of Directors



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.



Winter Programs 2018

Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

652 17th Avenue NE., Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org

Buddhist Psychology Series

Constructing the Self

Taught by Michael and Joen O'Neal



A central concern of all of us as humans is the nature of mind. Our mind largely determines our experience in this world. This course will focus on how we construct a sense of self, and how that self relates to other aspects of consciousness and to how we act. It will include a study of Vasubandhu's "Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only." The course will include meditation, lecture, and discussion.

Minneapolis (#B84)

Wednesdays, Jan. 17 – March 7 (eight sessions)

7:00–9:00 p.m.

\$185 (members \$165) (includes course texts)

Member rates apply to members of all local Dharma centers.

Reduced fees are offered as needed; please contact the Center at (612) 781-7640.

To register, use the form on page 6 or go to www.OceanDharma.org.

Upcoming Spring 2018 Buddhist Psychology Series course: "How Enlightenment Works" (March 28-May 16)

Center for Mindful Living: Programs in Mindfulness

Total Dynamic Living - An Eight-Week Program in Mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

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, four 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.

#194 Minneapolis: Tuesdays

Jan. 16–March 6 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Joen O'Neal

Location: Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis (in the Northeast Arts District)

#275 St. Paul: Thursdays

Jan. 18–March 8 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Michael O'Neal

Location: Clouds in Water Zen Center

445 Farrington St., St. Paul (near University Ave. and Western Ave.)

27 CEUs are available for nurses, social workers, educators, and psychologists.

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, March 3 • 9:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Location: 652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis



Gift certificates for the Introductory Program in Mindfulness are available. Please email admin@OceanDharma.org or call (612) 781-7640.

Guiding Teachers



Joen 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 Hokyoji 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.

The guiding teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, call the Center.

Volunteers are welcomed and needed, to help sustain and grow Compassionate Ocean. Special areas for volunteer help are the Finance Committee, Publicity and Promotion Committee, and Fundraising Committee. People to help take care of our building (cleaning, etc.) are also needed. Please contact the Center for more information.

Meditation and Dharma Talks

Most Sunday and Friday mornings throughout the year Compassionate Ocean offers meditation practice (sitting and walking) followed by a Dharma talk and discussion, focusing on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life. Our practice is in the mindfulness traditions of Soto Zen and Thich Nhat Hahn. Everyone is invited to participate. There are no prerequisites; people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome. The Sunday gathering is co-led by Joen and Michael. Joen leads the Friday group.

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

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

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

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

Welcome Sessions

New people are always welcome at our Sunday and Friday morning gatherings. To provide a special welcome, sessions that include an orientation to our practice are offered periodically. These are excellent opportunities to find out more if you are curious but haven't got around to coming.

Sunday, Jan. 7, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

Friday, Jan. 12, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

Orientation to Zen Meditation

Basic instruction in Zen sitting practice. No pre-registration needed.

Sunday mornings at 8:15 A.M.

Introduction to Zen Practice with Michael

A two-class introduction to Zen meditation and related practices. No fee; pre-registration required.

Mondays, Feb. 5 & 12, 7:00-8:30 P.M.

Weekday Meditation Sessions

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings
7:00 zazen (sitting), 7:40 chanting service, 8:00 temple cleaning (to 8:15)

Thursday evenings

7:30 zazen (sitting), 8:00 kinhin (walking), 8:10 zazen, 8:40 ending.

People are welcome to come for any part of the schedule.

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. These retreats are excellent opportunities to strengthen and deepen the practice of presence, including benefiting from the support of others.

Days of Mindfulness

Saturday, Jan. 13, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Saturday, Feb. 10, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Saturday, March 10, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Led by Joen and Michael

Each day will include sitting and walking meditation, a Dharma talk, body practice, and a work period. There will also be an opportunity to meet with a teacher. Includes vegetarian lunch. Fee: \$35 (members \$30).

Facing Climate Change: For a Future to Be Possible

This ongoing monthly series focuses on the unfolding crisis of climate disruption and the many related issues facing us at this time, including how we can meaningfully engage.

Each evening begins with an optional vegetarian potluck at 6:00 P.M., followed by a program from 7:00-9:00. Programming includes guest presenters, films, information sharing, and dialogue. Anyone with an interest is invited to come to any of these gatherings.

There are no fees, but please sign up in advance by emailing the Center at admin@OceanDharma.org, indicating whether you will be attending the potluck. Also email if you would like to be added to the "For a Future to Be Possible" email list to be kept informed of future events.

Winter Schedule: Friday evenings, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 23



Winter 2018 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 (#194)
- St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#275)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

- Saturday, March 3, 9:00 A.M.– 3:00 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

“Constructing the Self” Course

- Wednesday evenings (#B84)
Jan. 17-March 7 (\$25 deposit)

Introduction to Zen Practice Mini-Course

- Feb. 5 & 12 (no fee)

Days of Mindfulness

- Saturday, Jan. 13
- Saturday, JFeb. 10
- Saturday, March 10 (enclose payment of \$25 members, \$30 non-members)

Facing Climate Change (no fee)

- Friday, Jan. 26
- Friday, Feb. 23
- Friday, March 23

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

To register, send this form along with the non-refundable deposit listed (payable to CODC) to:
Compassionate Ocean Zen Center
652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org
Or register online on our website in the “Classes & Retreats” section.

We Are (Slightly) Changing Our Name

For the sake of clarity we’re changing our name from Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center to Compassionate Ocean Zen Center. Both “Dharma” and “Zen” have a wide range of meanings with some overlap. It seems less confusing to use the term “Zen.” For a certain period of transition you may see either name used as we work through the change process.

Our name “Compassionate Ocean” is a translation of the name of our honorary founder, Jikai (“Compassion-Ocean”) Dainin Katagiri. Jikai can be understood as “Ocean of Compassion,” which seems easy to understand. “Compassionate Ocean” is pointing out something a little different: to the ground or source of our life that is constantly supporting and maintaining us along with all beings.

Wish List

- Video projector
- Computer technical support
- Graphic design help
- Assistance with marketing/promotion

Let’s Stay in Touch

We’re making greater use of email communication to send information about our activities. There is more happening at Compassionate Ocean than we can fit in the newsletter. If you aren’t currently receiving periodic emails from us, please send your email address to admin@OceanDharma.org and we will include you.

You are invited...

...to become a Sustaining Member of Compassionate Ocean, joining others to make possible the continued life of our Center. For further information please go to our website or contact us to request a Membership Brochure.



Thank you to all members for your support!



November 3rd—first snowfall of the season.



Participants in our two fall Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) courses.



Michael with Shuten Mishima, who visited our Center in November. Shuten is in his fourth year of training at Eiheiji Monastery in Japan. Founded in 1244 by Eihei Dogen, Eiheiji is one of the main training centers for Soto Zen priests. As part of his training, Shuten spent the fall practicing at Ryumonji Monastery in Iowa. This trip was his first time outside Japan.



Closing circle at our fall MBSR retreat.



Mike Howard prepares cookies at our Labor Day practice period at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community.



Michael giving a talk at the fall Buddhist Studies class, "Understanding Our Mind."



Joen leading Chi Gong at our MBSR retreat.



Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
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Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640
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www.OceanDharma.org

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Winter Program Highlights

- **Buddhist Studies Course: Constructing the Self**
- **Introductory Programs in Mindfulness (MBSR)** offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul
- **Introduction to Zen Practice Mini-Course**
- **Days of Mindfulness**
- **Benefit Concert with Adam Kuenzel and Layton "Skip" James**

Benefit Concert

**Adam Kuenzel, Principal Flute, Minnesota Orchestra and
Layton "Skip" James, retired Principal Keyboard, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra**

Program:

- **Suite in A Minor by George Frideric Handel**
 - **Four sonatas by J. S. Bach**
- **Plus solo pieces for flute and harpsichord**

**4:00 P.M. Sunday, February 11
at Compassionate Ocean Zen Center
Tickets: \$40**



This intimate performance, rescheduled from last fall, will feature baroque music presented by two outstanding Twin Cities musicians. It will be the first musical event to be held in our renovated meditation space. Seating is limited. To purchase tickets visit our website, OceanDharma.org.