



Just Now

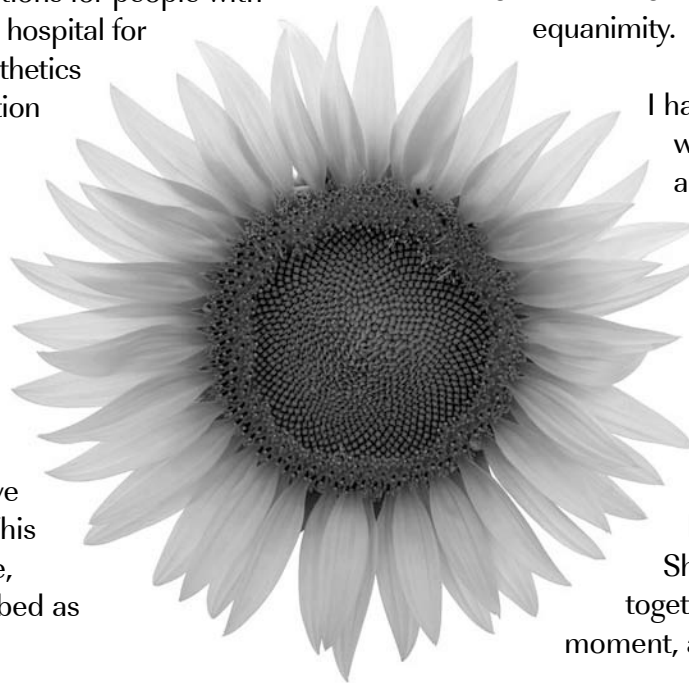
by Joen Snyder O'Neal

Recently I read about a Japanese Buddhist priest named Doyu Ozawa. As a young man during World War II he had lost both his legs, and because of this he suffered a lot. Japan was a poor country, devastated by war, with no accommodations for people with disabilities. There was no VA hospital for him to go to, no miracle prosthetics available. Every day his situation was very difficult. Finally he realized that the actuality of his situation was that, *just now*, he was born as a person with no legs. He had just been born *now* as a person with no legs. That was how he could accept the reality of his life in this moment and could live positively without his legs. This was a turning point in his life, and after that he was described as always smiling.

This is a very inspiring story for me. It vividly teaches how our life is just appearing in each moment, like pure spring water coming out of the earth. There is in actuality no past, no future. Our suffering comes from thinking it so and carrying the burden of who we think we are and where we think we are going or should be going.

The other day I was giving a talk about a Zen essay called Genjo-Koan ("Manifesting Absolute Reality") by the great thirteenth century Zen master Eihei Dogen. Even though I have been studying, practicing, and teaching Zen for the past 40 years, I still get intimidated by Dogen, an exceptionally deep and poetic writer, and take a mental position that I can't teach his words. This position is based on stories I have told myself from the time I was a child about what I can and cannot do.

But as I was about to give my talk, I remembered Rev. Dowu and thought to myself, "I am born in this moment as someone who is going to give a talk about Zen Master Dogen's words." Then I was able to accept the reality of the situation and go forward with relative equanimity.



I have a dharma daughter who was sure she couldn't cook and was in fact quite emotional about the impossibility of her doing this. Then she went to a practice period at a monastery where she had to take her turn doing the cooking. After some tears she just went ahead and cooked, letting go of her whole non-cooking story. She and the vegetables arose together, fresh in the living present moment, and she was fine!

This is the heart of Zen practice—just plunging into the reality that is arising right now. We are mindful of our stories, our fears, our judgments, and then we let go and just do it. When I did monastic training, there was no space to indulge all the myriad movements of the mind, for and against. We just followed the schedule, opening to the activity of the moment. That is why it is called *training*: training the body and mind to wholeheartedly enter *thusness*.

And so it is with zazen, sitting meditation: the bell rings and there you are—a person being born *now*, sitting upright in the middle of the universe. And also in our daily life—a person being born *just now*, driving, leading a meeting, cleaning, having the flu. No holding back!

Autumn Appeal

Dear Friend,

As we give special thanks at this time of year, we are grateful to be part of a community of support for Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center. The Dharma Center is dedicated to the cultivation of mindful awareness and mindful engagement in every aspect of our lives—opening to the wondrousness of life for the benefit of all.

In the past year the Center has offered introductory courses in mindfulness based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn in every season, including a special course offered last summer at no cost for people who had lost their jobs. Also offered were courses based on the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh; a course based on a modern interpretation of the *Odyssey* by Zen teacher Norman Fischer; and courses on works by classic Zen teachers Eihei Dogen and Seng Ts'an.

The Center also offered beginning and continuing retreats throughout the year; special events co-sponsored with other local Zen centers; and regular sittings and community gatherings on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday mornings. Our teachers, Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal, have worked with great dedication teaching, meeting with people, building, and leading practice.

As a friend of Compassionate Ocean, and most likely a graduate of one or more programs, you know the value of this practice for yourself as well as for others. A recent mindfulness graduate wrote, "This course can be literally lifesaving." Another commented, "My increased awareness and mindfulness has impacted most if not all parts of my daily life." Another wrote, "You've helped me tremendously. Thank you!"

Financially, this year has been the most difficult for our Center since its incorporation in 2000. The strained economic situation has squeezed income in a variety of areas, and our budget was very lean to begin with. Program fees cover a portion of the Center's expenses, but only the generosity of friends and supporters makes it possible for the Center to continue to offer its programs. This year-end appeal is a key source of financial support. Our goal is \$15,000, of which \$4,500 has already been contributed.

Would you consider making a contribution at this time? Donations of all amounts are important and will make a real difference. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Thank you for considering this request. May mindful awareness and a loving heart be present in us all.



For the Board of Directors

Gala and Silent Auction a Great Success



On November 7 the Dharma Center held its first silent auction in the Casket Arts Building, across the street from the building we are renovating

in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. The event was attended by well over 200 people. 170 items were available to bid on, displayed in the lobbies on three floors and the "Asian Wing" in the Compassionate Ocean office. The items included services, get-aways, art work, baskets of themed items, "Great Gatherings," and more.

Paper lanterns lit the lobbies, decorated with red and gold tablecloths, gold napkins, and gold cards. Delicious food was served on the second and third floors, and live entertainment was on the third floor. A good time seemed to be had by all!

The net proceeds from the auction are \$11,300, with a few more payments outstanding. This is a tremendous help to the Center. We want to thank the many, many donors of items, food, music, t'ai chi, advice, and so much more; the many volunteers who worked for hours and hours to make this a successful event; and all the people who came and enjoyed the event.

Thank you all!



Winter Programs 2010

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

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Finding True Happiness (B42)

Taught by Joen Snyder O'Neal

The Buddha taught that we should look deeply at the nature of the suffering in our lives, and through that looking, discover a way to happiness and freedom. This teaching is known as the Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering; the truth of the cause of suffering; the truth of the end of suffering (the truth of happiness); and the truth of the Path.

Through presentations by the teacher and group discussions, we will use the Buddha's teaching as a framework for examining the dynamic of suffering and happiness in our own lives. The course will also include sitting meditation with instruction. We will be using the book *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* by Thich Nhat Hanh, provided at the first class.

Mondays, January 18-March 8 (eight sessions) • 7:00 - 9:00 P.M.

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

Practice Circle Group (B43)

With Sosan Theresa Flynn

This group provides an opportunity for you to establish your meditation and mindfulness practice with a supportive group of like-minded people. Establishing a practice is hard to do alone, and much easier with the support of others. Each circle session will include meditation, a short dharma talk, and a chance to share your struggles and insights through the practice of mindful speech and deep listening.

Tuesdays, January 26, February 9 & 23 and March 9 (every other Tuesday)

7:00 - 9:00 P.M.

Fee: \$80 (members \$70)

Manifesting Zen Insight: A Practice Seminar for Experienced Students (B44)

Led by Michael O'Neal

This seminar is designed for people who have been practicing with a sangha for some period of time and would like to meet with others to look at the nature of practice and its integration into daily life. Each of the four sessions will combine sitting meditation (with instruction), presentations by the seminar leader, and discussion. As part of our study we will look at several selections from Dainin Katagiri Roshi's book *You Have to Say Something: Manifesting Zen Insight*, provided at the first class.

Wednesdays, January 20, February 3 & 17 and March 3 (every other Wednesday)

7:00 - 9:00 P.M.

Fee: \$80 (members \$70) + \$20 materials fee

***All Buddhist Studies courses will meet at the CASKET ARTS BUILDING
681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210 (in the Northeast Arts District of Minneapolis)**

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.

#170 Minneapolis: Tuesdays

January 19 – March 9 • 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)

#247 St. Paul: Thursdays

January 21 – March 11 • 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, February 20, 2010

8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

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



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 Jan. 3 after our Winter break. No meetings Dec. 20 or Dec. 27

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 Jan. 8 after our Winter break. No meetings Dec. 25 or Jan. 1

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. Held at Three Smooth Stones, 3336 E. 25th St., Minneapolis.

Open Houses

New people are always welcome at sangha gatherings. To provide a special welcome, open houses that include 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.

Sunday, January 10, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

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

Friday, January 15, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

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

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.

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.

Four-day Retreat at Ryumonji Monastery

Location is in northeastern Iowa

Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7:00 P.M. – Sunday, Feb. 28, 3:00 P.M.

Led by Shoken Winecoff, Joen Snyder O'Neal & Michael O'Neal. Fee due in advance: members \$55/night, non-members \$65/night (includes meals and lodging) Weekend-only participation is possible.

One-day Sittings

Saturday, January 23, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Saturday, March 27, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal. These include sitting and walking meditation, yoga practice, and a dharma talk by Joen Snyder O'Neal or Michael O'Neal. Participants should bring a bag lunch; drinks will be provided. Fee: \$20 members, \$25 nonmembers

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 Hokyo-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.



Winter 2010 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 (#170)
- St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#247)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

- Saturday, February 20, 8:30 A.M.– 2:30 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings

- Minneapolis, Monday evenings (#B42)
(\$25 deposit)

Practice Circle Group

- Minneapolis, Monday evenings (#B43)
(\$25 deposit)

Manifesting Zen Insight

- Minneapolis, Wednesday evenings (#B44)
(\$25 deposit)

Retreat at Ryumonji

- February 24, 7:00 P.M.-February 28, 3:00 P.M.
(enclose payment of \$65 per night, members \$55)

One-day Sittings

- January 23, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
(enclose payment of \$25, members \$20)
- March 27, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
(enclose payment of \$25, members \$20)

**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

Study Seminar

During the fall, four teachers and twelve students studied the *Genjokoan*, a fundamental essay from the thirteenth century Japanese Zen Master, Dogan. As part of our homework, as we tried to understand this difficult and beautiful essay, we wrote poems. We print a few here, and will print more in future newsletters.



So if there are no words
Why?

Do we try so hard for them.

Why not?

Just sit as one

Pointing here

Letting go ---

Jean

Planting garlic, I prepare the bed,

Digging in manure from horses

And compost from the weeds of summer.

As I press each clove into the soil

I feel the web and pulse of our life

And let go of spring shoots.

Mary Ann

I wake in the morning

to the round boat of my body

floating on "Where am I" and "What time."

The master of "No myriad dharmas"
rides a wave of "Just Now"

while I, tossed about from past to future,
imagine myself a sleepy apprentice.

Marion

A Thich Nhat Hanh Retreat Without Thich Nhat Hanh



Compassionate Ocean Dhara Center members and friends.
Back row: Rob Hubbard, Diane Benjamin with Anna, Julie Holmen,
Sosan Flynn with Seamus, Naomi Siegal, Rochelle Weber
Front row: Ramona Advani, Harriet O'Brian, ChiSing Norman Eng,
Carol Mockovak



Anna Benjamin (right) with a nun and friends.

In September at one of our sangha gatherings we had a wonderful opportunity to listen to participants who had traveled at the end of the summer to Thich Nhat Hanh retreats at three locations: the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park Colorado, Deer Park Monastery in California, and Blue Cliff Monastery in New York. Through their shared stories our practice community was reminded how we are connected to an extensive web of teachers and practitioners near and far.

The theme of the Estes Park retreat was *"One Buddha is Not Enough,"* Unfortunately, Thich Nhat Hanh (referred to as 'Thay,' meaning teacher) had developed an illness that put him in the hospital during the entire retreat. (He has since recovered and led the other two late summer retreats.) Rather than being a lasting disappointment, his absence became an opportunity for the monastics to teach and lead rather than be "extras" at the retreat, and for the participants to join in the community of Buddhist practice. Diane Benjamin said, "This was my sixth retreat. It was the deepest practice in terms of energy and solidarity. We all had to be Thay."

Even those who were attending their first Thich Nhat Hanh retreat were not deterred by his absence. Harriet O'Brian reflected, "When I first heard the news, I thought 'Oh no, we might as well go home.' Then my mind switched. Thay is here with us and we are there with him." She, like Diane Benjamin, witnessed how the monastics and most participants were able to respond to the situation with grace and strength. Harriet observed, "It was seamless. Everybody stepped up to be a buddha. Everybody just stepped into it. It was unforgettable."

Hopes and expectations for a retreat can leave one, and the practice community, vulnerable to discouragement if unexpected changes alter the program. We look to our teachers and practice communities for spiritual insight and wisdom to help us live our lives with a little more ease and grace. At the Colorado retreat participants were challenged with the absence of a teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, and discovered the strength of the monastic community and themselves to embody the lessons of his teaching. These are powerful lessons for our own practice and community near our homes. It is the gift that comes back from retreats to those of us unable to attend. And for that we are grateful.



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

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Winter Program Highlights

- Introductory Programs in Mindfulness offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Buddhist Studies course:
"The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching"
taught by Joen Snyder O'Neal
- Four-week Practice Circle Group
with Sosan Theresa Flynn
- Four-week "Manifesting Zen Insight"
Practice Seminar with Michael O'Neal
- Four-day Retreat at Ryumonji
- One-day Sitzings

AUTUMN APPEAL
see page 2!

GALA and SILENT AUCTION a huge success!



On November 7 Compassionate Ocean hosted a gala and silent auction that delighted over 200 people. For more about the Gala, see page 2.