



Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

A Center for Mindful Living

681 17th Avenue NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 36 • Fall 2013

No Coming, No Going

by Michael O'Neal

Once when Great Master Ma and Pai Chang were walking together they saw some wild ducks fly by.

The Great Master asked, "What is that?"

Chang said, "Wild ducks.

The Great Master said, "Where have they gone?"

"Chang said, "They've flown away."



The Great Master then twisted Pai Chang's nose.

Chang cried out in pain.

The Great Master said, "When have they ever flown away?"

—*Blue Cliff Record* (Cleary & Cleary, trans.)

This is a good example of a Zen koan—a bit odd, a bit rough, but pointing out something important.

We spend most of our time living in a world of separate things, like "wild ducks," and discrete events, like "flown away." This is the world we experience through thought and language, which masterfully creates distinctions between this and that, now and then. This is the world of our ordinary common experience and makes up conventional reality. Thich Nhat Hanh refers to this as "the historical dimension."

In this world there is a built-in insecurity. Despite all our efforts, nothing stays the way we want it to. With such a multitude of separate things and such a torrent of events, we feel threatened and anxious. We naturally yearn for a world where we can experience calm and peace.

In fact, such a world is available to us. It is exactly the same world, but experienced differently. This is the "world" that is present beneath or before the distinctions we make—a world of wholeness, of completeness, just as it is. Zen master Dogen says, "It is never apart from one, right where one is." When we look at a wave, we see it being born, rising, cresting, falling, and finally disappearing. But its nature as water never changes. Thich Nhat Hanh calls this "the ultimate dimension."

Generally speaking, our everyday life emphasizes the world of separation, and religious life emphasizes the world of wholeness. We come to religious practice partly to establish our connection with the ultimate dimension, from which we tend to be estranged. We find it comforting just to hear about the ultimate dimension, but real spiritual security comes from touching this dimension for ourselves.

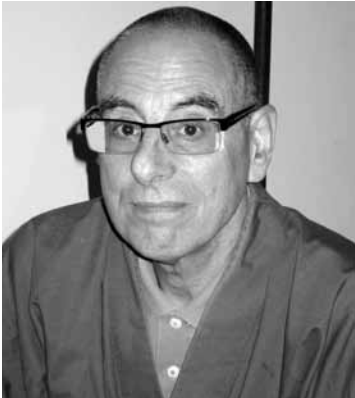
There is a danger, however, that we become attached to the peacefulness and calm of the ultimate dimension, and turn away from the historical dimension, with all its endless difficulties. We can seek to escape from the relative into the absolute. This is a kind of spiritual sickness, and effective spiritual practice turns us back to engage the historical dimension without flinching, without whining, and without evading. In fact, our basic task as human beings is to take care of the historical dimension in the best possible way, for the benefit of all, grounded in the security of the ultimate dimension. This is our actual situation, whether we are aware of it or not. Dogen Zenji expresses it this way: "We are simultaneously walking on the floor of the ocean and swimming on the surface." The floor of the ocean is the ultimate dimension; the surface, with all its waves and changing conditions, is the historical dimension. In every moment, both aspects are present.

The name of our Center, "Compassionate Ocean," points to both dimensions of human life. "Ocean" refers to the undiminishable wholeness of reality; "compassionate" points to our engagement in the conditioned world to cultivate peace and harmony.

In the koan, Great Master Ma wants to hear Pai Chang give some expression of the ultimate dimension in the midst of the historical, but despite two invitations, Chang stays solidly in the conventional. The pain of his twisted nose pulls him out of his dream of conventionality, and Master Ma expresses the ultimate for him. They—and we—are in a world where wild ducks fly away, but also one where there is no coming, no going. "When have they ever flown away?"

Zen Teacher and Poet Norman Fischer

Visits Twin Cities



In May three local Zen Centers co-sponsored a visit to the Twin Cities by Zen teacher and poet Norman Fischer. Norman recently published two books: *Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong*, and *The Strugglers*, a book of poems. Compassionate Ocean hosted two talks, Dharma Field hosted a talk and a reception, and the Minnesota Zen Center hosted a workshop. Norman also gave a poetry reading at Magers and Quinn bookstore. His talks combined warmth, humor, and wisdom in a fresh presentation of Zen. We look forward to Norman's next visit.

...[I]t is artificial to separate life from death. In a very concrete and down-to-earth sense, there is no such thing as "life" or "death." In Zen practice we speak of "birth-and-death" as being one phenomenon, and of course it is....Time passing is birth-and-death. Moments arise and then pass away; this is one action, one moment. Loss is constant and conditions our every thought, word and deed. When I train caregivers for the dying in spiritual hospice care, I always tell them that the work they do isn't about death, it's about life. You are alive as long as you are alive, and when you are not, you are not. It's a mistake to think of a hospice patient as "dying." The patient is alive as long as she is alive. Truly, she is no more dying than we are. For we are dying. That's what living is: dying a little, moment after moment.

—from *Training in Compassion* by Norman Fischer





Fall Programs 2013

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

681 17th Avenue NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org

Inconceivable Liberation

The Teaching of Vimalakirti

Vimalakirti was a greatly realized layman who lived at the time of the Buddha. In the sutra named after him he is the central character in a rich drama that includes miraculous visions, famous disciples and bodhisattvas, stories within stories, and profound discourses on the nature of reality. The sutra is also one of the most playful and humorous works in the Buddhist canon.



In this ten-week course we will go through the sutra in detail, participating both in its carefully crafted humor and its sophisticated discourses on Dharma. Each class will include sitting meditation, a presentation by the instructors, and class discussion.

To register, go to www.OceanDharma.org or call (612) 781-7640.

Taught by **Joen Snyder O'Neal, Michael O'Neal, and Sosan Flynn**
with special guest lecturer **Ken Ford**

Joen and Michael are Guiding Teachers of Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center.
Sosan and Ken are on the teaching staff of Clouds in Water Zen Center.

7:00-9:00 P.M. Wednesdays, Sept. 18-Nov. 20

#210 Casket Arts Building • 681 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN

in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District

Fees: \$200 tuition (members \$170) + \$25 materials fee (includes text)

Member rates apply to members of all local Dharma centers. Reduced fees are offered as needed.

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.

#181 Minneapolis: Mondays
Sept. 23-Nov. 11 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Joen Snyder O'Neal

Location: Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
#210 Casket Arts Building, 681 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
(in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District)

#259 St. Paul: Thursdays
Thursdays, 6:30-9:00 P.M.—Sept. 26-Nov. 14

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, November 9, 2013 • 8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

Location: 681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis

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



2013 Great Gatherings

We are continuing the program of Great Gatherings started at the 2009 Silent Auction with two programs offered by members of the Center. Space is limited. Call 612-781-7640 to reserve a place. These programs will be held in the Casket Arts Building, Suite 210. A donation of \$20 is suggested.

- Eating for Health in an Interdependent World, Saturday, October 19, 7:00-8:30 P.M.**

Bobbie Fredsall has been contributing articles on food issues to the Eastside Food Co-op's newsletter for several years. She will discuss how we can make our food choices while being mindful of the effects of the production of our food in our interdependent world

- Sustainable Living: Saturday, November 16, 7:00-8:30 P.M.**

John Carmody, Director of the Center for Sustainable Building Research at the University of Minnesota, will discuss what each of us can do in our daily lives, our homes, and our communities to contribute to a sustainable future.

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.

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: Gatherings resume on September 8.

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: Gatherings resume on September 6.

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.

One-day Retreat

Saturday, Oct. 12, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

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

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal

This includes 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

Rohatsu: Buddha's Enlightenment Sesshin

Sat., November 30, 7:00 PM – Sat., December 7, 9:00 AM

1626 Jefferson St. NE, Minneapolis

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal & Michael O'Neal and Byakuren Judith Ragir.

Sesshin literally means "to gather the heart/mind." The December Rohatsu ("seven-day") sesshin commemorates and reenacts the seven days of meditation culminating in the enlightenment of the Buddha, traditionally celebrated on Dec. 8. Rohatsu sesshin take place at Zen centers throughout the world at this time. This sesshin offers a special opportunity to touch the depth of human life, supporting and being supported by innumerable beings. This sesshin will be held jointly with Clouds in Water Zen Center and is open to community members as well as others who have had experience with Buddhist practice and meditation. If this will be your first retreat with us, please call Compassionate Ocean in advance to discuss.

Participants can register for one to seven days. Registration will open October 1, with fees and registration information available on our website (www.OceanDharma.org). Early registration is encouraged. Fee: \$45/day for nonmembers, \$36/day for members of Compassionate Ocean Dharma or Clouds in Water.

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.

Guiding Teachers



Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal

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 Hokyōji 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.

Fall 2013 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 (#181)
- ☐ St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#259)

Total Dynamic Living—One Day Retreat

- ☐ Saturday, Nov. 9, 8:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

Inconceivable Liberation

- ☐ Minneapolis, Monday evenings (#B66)
(\$25 deposit)

One-Day Sangha Retreat

- ☐ Saturday, October 12
(enclose payment of \$25, members \$20 each)

Buddha's Enlightenment Sesshin

- ☐ Saturday, Nov. 30- Saturday Dec. 7
(Full payment with registration: \$36/day members, \$45/day non-members)

Great Gatherings (\$20)

- ☐ Saturday, October 19
- ☐ Saturday, November 16

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
681 17th Ave. NE Ste. 210, Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org
Or register online on our website. See the program pages.

Deep Appreciation

...to all who supported the Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center in recent 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.

Ramona Advani	Nancy James	John Russell
Karen Ahern	Andrew Jones	Kevin Scattum
Luda Anastaziesky	Linda Jones	Joe Schierl
Bruce Anderson	Nancy Kaiser	Lisa Schlessinger
Kent Anderson	Terry Ann Karis	Mary Alice Sell
R.T. Anderson	Tomoe Katagiri	Donna Simmons
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Jennifer Ashwill	Mary Ellen Kavanaugh	Dale Snyder
Kathleen Avila	Keith Kennedy	Elizabeth Snyder
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Ken & Barbara Ford	Susan Nelson	Anonymous
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Steve Haskin	Norman Randolph	
Susan Heitzman	Scott Rattet	
Dan Hess	Phoebe Reinhart	
Tom Hess	John Renwick	
Julie Holmen	Kelly Reynolds	
Joseph Holt	Alan Rodgers	
Emily Jarrett Hughes	Brian Roessler	
Timothy Iverson	Sara Rogers	



Happenings



In August Rev. Teijo Munnich visited the Twin Cities with three of her Zen students. Teijo is the abbess of Great Tree Women's Temple in Charlotte, North Carolina. She practiced for many years at the Minnesota Zen Center under the guidance of Dainin Katagiri Roshi, from whom she received priest ordination in 1981 and Dharma transmission in 1989. She is a long-time friend and Dharma sibling of Joen and Michael. The group's journey was a pilgrimage that included the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, Sanshin Zen Community in Indiana, Ryumonji Zen Center in Iowa, Hokyoji Zen Practice Community in southeastern Minnesota, as well as the Zen centers in the Twin Cities.



Chimyo, Michael, Teijo, Joen, David, Brook (in front)

Our building renovation is nearing completion. Recent projects have included interior trim, kitchen counter tops, and a new entrance. Visitors to the building find it beautiful and inspiring. These photos were taken by photographer Rebecca Pavlenko on a volunteer work day at the building in July.





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admin@oceandharma.org
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Fall Program Highlights

- **Introductory Programs in Mindfulness**
- **Buddhist Studies course:**
 - Inconceivable Liberation:
The Teaching of Vimalakirti
- **One-day Retreat:**
 - Saturday, October 12
- **Rohatsu: Buddha's Enlightenment Sesshin**
 - Sat. Nov 30- Sat. Dec 7
- **Great Gatherings:**
 - October 19 and Nov 16

7:00 P.M. Friday, Nov. 1 "The Teaching of Vimalakirti"

Presented as an audience-participation play
Cast of characters includes the Buddha, Vimalakirti, Manjusri, Shariputra, Ananda, Mara, goddesses, and innumerable other beings, human and non-human. Features marvelous visions, dramatic role reversals, brilliant dialogue, and delightful humor.

Clouds in Water Zen Center
308 Prince St., St. Paul
By donation
Pre-registration is encouraged.

