



Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

A Center for Mindful Living

681 17th Avenue NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 37 • Winter 2014

I Never Noticed That Before

by Joen Snyder O'Neal

Many years ago I was walking back to my office after a lunch break when I passed by a “junk shop,” full of used things that didn’t quite rise to the level of antiques.

I felt a sudden tug, turned back and went in. I asked the woman at the counter if there was perhaps a Buddha statue anywhere in the shop. “What’s that?” she said. I tried to describe what I was seeking, demonstrating the posture and holding my hands in the mudra. “Well,” she said, “I don’t recall ever seeing anything like that.” At that moment she shifted her body slightly to the left, and I looked over her shoulder to see a two-foot-high shining golden Buddha statue sitting on the desk behind her—so beautiful! I pointed it out to her and she said, “Oh, I never noticed that before.” She sold it to me for \$25.

One of the teachings in Buddhism is of the six realms of existence: those populated by Heavenly Beings, Fighting Spirits, Humans, Animals, Hungry Ghosts, and Hell Beings. The Buddha taught that these are realms—modes of experience—that we transmigrate into moment after moment, depending on our intention, our action, and our state of consciousness. For example, if our life is centered on continually seeking to satisfy our desires, we are likely to find ourselves in the Hungry Ghost realm. Beings in this realm are typically depicted as having very large stomachs and tiny throats—constantly hungry, but never able to satisfy their longing.

This teaching is presented in Wheel of Life, an ancient Buddhist visual teaching often painted over the entrance to a monastery. In the depiction of the six realms, a Buddha is present in each realm. For instance, in the Hungry



image from education.asianart.org

Ghost Realm there is a Buddha holding a container of nectar from the heavenly realm—because the only means of liberation from this realm is to substitute the desire for truth for sensual cravings. In the human realm the Buddha is holding a book, indicating our potential to learn and to benefit from our insights. These Buddhas indicate that wherever you are, in whatever kind of psychological or physical state you find yourself, there is a great opportunity to wake up!

The evening of the day I found the golden Buddha I presided over an ecumenical service commemorating Hiroshima Day at the Basilica in downtown Minneapolis. I was wearing my full zen robes, and the Buddha statue was placed under the large hanging statue of

Jesus on the Cross. Wow, I thought, from the junk shop to the altar of the largest Catholic church in the upper Midwest in just a few short hours!

There is a Buddha in every realm. There was a Buddha in the junk shop, but the saleslady had never noticed it. I’m sure a lot of people noticed it when it was enshrined on the altar at the Basilica.

I still look for the Buddha wherever I go.

Once, many years ago when I was sitting a regular period of zazen at the Minnesota Zen Center, I was really spaced out, traveling all over the universe in the forty-minute period. When the bell sounded at the end I was startled, and it took me a few minutes to land. I became vaguely aware of a giant Buddha sitting upright in the middle of the universe I’d been exploring. As I came to, I said to myself with amazement, “Oh, it’s me!”

2013 Year–End Appeal

“We practice generosity toward others, and we practice toward ourselves, over and over again. The power of giving grows until it becomes like a great flowing waterfall, until it becomes so natural for us that this is who we are.”

— Sharon Salzberg

Dear Friend,

As we give thanks at this time of year I am deeply grateful to all who have practiced and studied with Compassionate Ocean, and to all who have so generously supported the Center. As a community we are dedicated to practice kindness, mindful awareness and engagement in every aspect of life for the benefit of others. By supporting each other, we all grow.

Over the course of the past year Compassionate Ocean has offered innumerable doorways to mindful living. Joen and Michael are completing their 20th year offering the Total Dynamic Living program in mindfulness and mindfulness-based stress reduction. Other offerings have included introductory sessions, Buddhist studies classes, Friday and Sunday sangha gatherings, one-day retreats, Great Gatherings, as well as longer retreats and other joint activities with other Zen Centers. Our teachers have given presentations at universities and interfaith gatherings. And we had the great opportunity of co-hosting Zen teacher Norman Fischer last spring in his workshops and talks on “Training in Compassion.”

It is through the generosity of friends and supporters that it is possible for the Center to continue. Membership and other donations, program fees, and fundraising events cover a significant portion of our operating expenses (which are very lean); still, we depend on our Year-End Appeal as a key source of financial support. We have a very important goal of \$20,000 for this appeal.

Please consider making a donation at this time. A donation of any amount makes a real difference, and is deeply appreciated.

As we look forward to a new year of deepening and broadening in the way of truth and wholeness, let us all recommit ourselves to fully enter the great flowing waterfall of generosity that benefits all beings.

Yours in gratitude,

Donneen Torrey
Chair, Board of Directors



Winter Programs 2014

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

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

Loving Kindness

Courageously Opening to
Compassion

Taught by Sosan Theresa Flynn

Is it possible to deeply love ourselves and others in a way that is free from unwholesome attachment? Diving into the ocean of compassion begins with learning to love oneself. Far from a selfish activity, this radical acceptance provides the foundation upon which we can open to love for others. Because there are so many taboos in our culture about loving oneself, it is difficult to wholeheartedly embrace this experience in a healthy and expansive way.

In this class we will plant seeds of acceptance and cultivate the practice of opening our hearts. Using Sharon Salzberg's book, *Lovingkindness: the Revolutionary Art of Happiness*, we will learn and practice loving kindness meditation using the methods she presents. Please join us for this courageous journey of realizing wholeness in the face of suffering.

The course text will be available for purchase at the first class.

Sosan is on the teaching staff of both Compassionate Ocean and Clouds in Water Zen Center.

Minneapolis (#B67)
Wednesdays, Jan. 8–29
(four sessions)
7:00-9:00 P.M.
Fee: \$80

Reduced fees are offered as needed.



Buddhism 101

Taught by
Joen Snyder O'Neal

The word Buddha comes from the root word "buddh" which means "awake." A Buddha is one who is awake to the reality of the world. This course is offered as a short introduction to the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, including his life seen as an archetype that relates to our own struggle to wake up. The course will also include the basic

Buddhist teaching of the Four Noble Truths: suffering, its cause, its transformation, and the path that leads to its transformation. This teaching provides a framework for understanding and integrating all the teachings of the Buddha.

Each class will include sitting meditation (with instruction), a talk by the instructor, and class discussion. We will use the book *Buddhism Plain and Simple* by Steve Hagen as the course text.

The course text will be available for purchase at the first class.

Minneapolis (#B68)
Wednesdays, Feb. 12–March 5
(four sessions)
7:00-9:00 P.M.
Fee: \$80

These 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, 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.

#182 Minneapolis: Tuesdays

Jan. 14–March 4 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Michael O'Neal

Location: Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

#210 Casket Arts Building, 681 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
(in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District)

#260 St. Paul: Thursdays

Jan. 16–March 14 • 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, March 1, 2014 • 9:00 A.M.-3:00 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.



Ryumonji Zen Monastery Dedication

Zen Buddhism in the Midwest got a big boost in 1973 when Dainin Katagiri Roshi, a Soto Zen teacher from Japan, took up residence in Minneapolis. Joen and Michael, Compassionate Ocean's guiding teachers, were students of Katagiri Roshi. They have many dharma brothers and sisters who also were students of Katagiri Roshi, including Rev. Shoken Winecoff, the Abbott of Ryumonji Monastery in northeast Iowa. Ryumonji was designed in accordance with the Japanese Soto Zen model for monasteries, with four main buildings. After 13 years of planning, fundraising, and construction, the fourth building was completed this year, and was officially dedicated on June 30.

For several years Compassionate Ocean has joined Ryumonji for a weekend sesshin (practice period) in the spring (see photo of sangha members with Shoken). This gives us an opportunity to practice with Rev. Winecoff and the Ryumonji community in a beautiful, peaceful, and traditional setting. We are scheduled to go again to Ryumonji this April. Please join us!



Front row: Joen Snyder O'Neal, Shoken Winecoff, Michael O'Neal
Second row: Andy Jones, Bobbie Fredsall, Aaron Tovo, Donneen Torrey, Sosan Flynn

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: No Sunday gatherings on December 22 or 29. Gatherings resume January 5.

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: No Friday gatherings on December 20 or 27. Gatherings resume on January 3.

Guiding Teachers



Joen Snyder O'Neal and
Michael O'Neal

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

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 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.

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 Sitting

Saturday, Jan. 18, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Saturday, Feb. 15, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Saturday, March 15, 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

Weekend Retreat at Ryumonji Monastery

Friday, April 18, 5:30 P.M.-Sunday, April 20, 2:00 P.M.

Location is in northeastern Iowa

Led by Shoken Winecoff, Joen Snyder O'Neal & Michael O'Neal. Fee due in advance: members \$110, non-members \$130 (includes meals and lodging.)



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.

Winter 2014 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 (#182)
- ☐ St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#260)

Total Dynamic Living—One Day Retreat

- ☐ Saturday, March 1, 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

Loving Kindness

- ☐ Minneapolis, Monday evenings (#B67)
(\$25 deposit)

Buddhism 101

- ☐ Minneapolis, Wednesday evenings (#B68)
(\$25 deposit)

One-Day Sangha Retreats

- ☐ Saturday, January 18
- ☐ Saturday, February 15
- ☐ Saturday, March 15
(enclose payment of \$25, members \$20 each)

Ryumonji Retreat

- ☐ Friday, April 18—Sunday, April 20
(Full payment with registration: \$130 non-members, \$110 members)

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.

Reflections

Who am I? Where am I from? What does it mean? Are questions
that I ask

What do I do to find what's true seems such a daunting task
Grabbing thoughts floating by, believing they are real
Making up the stories that only just conceal

Naming forms and concepts, to make some kind of order
Forgetting that the truth of life does not have a border
Thinking I am a separate self from that which is to be
Is only an illusion that keeps me from being free

Searching here and there, trying to find my place
To make some sense, to want to know, to feel this moment's grace
Believing there is more than now, a delusion of my mind
Let go, let go and let it be, practice being kind

I am a manifestation of causes and conditions
Now you see me, now you don't, not understood by cognition
I am the wave, the ocean too, neither wrong or right
Beyond my thoughts, beyond this dream, there is a shining light

This light that shines holds no descriptive words
Reflections of Great Wisdom Mirror, no cries are left unheard
There is a way, I belong, a truth that I can follow
The Noble path, begin right now and not in the tomorrow

Not to fight, to struggle hard, to end the pain I feel
Accept my life, accept my self and know that love is real
That which is, the suchness, no beginning and no end
Holds my being in lovingness, on that I can depend

I have come to find there's nothing I must do
The gift's already given, to me and to you
Dwelling in the here and now, there is no need to know
All that is, life is a dance, I am welcomed to the show

—a poem through Kelly Reynolds

Kelly is a long-time member of Compassionate Ocean

Vimalakirti Class and Reading



This fall our Buddhist Studies program focused on the Vimalakirti Sutra, a profound, witty, and provocative Mahayana scripture. The central figure is a great bodhisattva named Vimalakirti ("Pure Renown") living as a layman in India at the time of the Buddha. Vimalakirti combines an uncompromising commitment to realizing deep truth with an untiring dedication to help others do the same. In the sutra he appears to be sick as a means of liberating others. When asked where his sickness came from, he replies, "My sickness comes from ignorance and the thirst for existence, and it will last as long as do the sicknesses of all living beings. Were all living beings to be free from sickness, I also would not be sick. Why? ...The bodhisattva loves all living beings as if each were his only child. He becomes sick when they are sick and is cured when they are cured. You ask me whence comes my sickness; the sicknesses of the bodhisattvas arise from great compassion."

Our fall program included a special staged reading of the sutra. For an evening we became the buddhas, bodhisattvas, disciples, gods, goddesses, and ordinary people living out the amazing events of the sutra.



Vimalakirti (played by Michael) on his sick bed



Shariputra (played by Kelly Reynolds) discourses with the Goddess (played by Rina Quartarone)



The Buddha (played by Joen) talks to Vimalakirti



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Winter Program Highlights

- **Introductory Programs in Mindfulness offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul**
- **Buddhist Studies courses**
 - Loving Kindness
 - Buddhism 101
- **One-day Retreats**
 - Saturday, January 18
 - Saturday, February 15
 - Saturday, March 15
- **Weekend Retreat at Ryumonji**
 - April 18 - 20

On Loving Kindness

Throughout our lives we long to love ourselves more deeply and to feel connected with others. Instead, we often contract, fear intimacy, and suffer a bewildering sense of separation.... What is the way out of this?

Spiritual practice, by uprooting our personal mythologies of isolation, uncovers the radiant, joyful heart within each of us and manifests this radiance to the world....Freeing ourselves from the illusion of separation allows us to live in a natural freedom rather than be driven by preconceptions about our own boundaries and limitations.

The Buddha described the spiritual path that leads to this freedom as “the liberation of the heart which is love,” and he taught a systematic, integrated path that moves the heart out of isolating contraction into true connection. That path is still with us as a living tradition of meditation practices that cultivate love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These four qualities are among the most beautiful and powerful states of consciousness we can experience.

— from the introduction to *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*
by Sharon Salzberg