



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

A Center for Mindful Living

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 60 • Winter 2023

Suffering and its Transformation

by Genpo Michael O'Neal

At the heart of the Buddha's teaching are the Four Noble Truths: the truth of *dukkha* (usually translated as *suffering*), its origin, its cessation, and the path that leads to its cessation. Thay Nhat Hanh calls the Four Noble Truths "the cream of the Buddha's teaching."

Actually, these are four aspects of one truth: making an appropriate response to our capacity for dis-ease as well as for genuine happiness. This is not a narrowly self-centered project; it is one that takes responsibility for the suffering of the whole world. What we are awakening to is this practice as the expression of our whole self. This includes taking care of our personal suffering.

In what is traditionally regarded as his first teaching, the Buddha presented the Four Noble Truths, including the fourth truth, the Noble Truth of the Path, which consists of eight aspects: Right View, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Diligence, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. He described this as the Middle Way between self-indulgence and self-mortification.

"Right"—a translation of *samma* or *samyak*—has the meaning, not of right versus wrong in a moralistic sense, but rather of "in the right way," straight, or upright. Through our awareness we discover what is genuinely of benefit for ourselves and others—a right way, an upright way, an appropriate way, to live and to practice. These are not arbitrary standards imposed from outside. Initially they can be seen as advice from a spiritual friend, but they are something to be confirmed for ourselves.

In his book *You Have to Say Something*, Katagiri Roshi says, "The word for 'right' is *samma*. It means 'to go along with,' 'to go together,' 'to turn together.' It originally comes from a term that means 'to unite.' So 'right' is a state of being in which everything can live together, or turn together, united. Right is a state of human life in which we live in peace and harmony with all other beings. It is right, beyond our ideas of right or wrong, good or bad."

Teijo Munnich, one of Katagiri Roshi's Dharma heirs, put it this way: "Rather than seeing the Eightfold Path as a list of specific ways to be or behave, *samma* suggests that we consider behavior that harmonizes with all of life....Samma encourages us to consider how our understanding, our thinking, our speech, our actions, our livelihood, our effort, our mindfulness, and our meditation can benefit all beings and can help us experience unity."

To deeply take responsibility, again and again, for the suffering in ourselves and in the world is a noble undertaking—a worthy response to the wondrous opportunity of being alive. It is a task—a practice—a way of dedicating our life energy—that will never end as long as there is suffering in the world. This is the way of a *bodhisattva*—a being dedicated to awakening for the benefit of all—and it is our way, because we are all bodhisattvas.

2022 Year-End Appeal

For over a century, the living circle of Zen has grown roots, put forth blossoms and flowers in North America. Let us honor the depth and breadth of Soto Zen Buddhism as it has transformed our lives.

—from a statement by leaders of Soto Zen Buddhism-North America,
on the occasion in November of 100 years of Soto Zen in North America

Dear Friend,

As 2022 draws to a close, we want to express our **deep appreciation** for your practice and your continued presence as part of Compassionate Ocean. Each of us has our own unique connection. Some have been active members for decades; others have just completed an introductory course; and still others connect and re-connect as life events and personal paths provide a way. In each case, we are a **precious part of a precious practice community**. We're all creating and breathing life through and into our Center each time we come together—to sit, to listen, to talk, to learn, to breathe. Compassionate Ocean and our practice together **create and transform** each one of us, over and over again, along with innumerable other beings.

As members of the Board of Directors, our concern is always to **take best care** of the elements that our community depends on to exist and to thrive: our wise teachers, our peaceful and welcoming place to gather, and—very importantly—the operational systems that are essential to the functioning of our community.

It is in this spirit that we write to you today—asking you to consider a donation to our **Year-End Appeal**.

Our goal is to raise \$25,000. For a Center like ours, \$25,000 makes a huge difference in the health and stability of our organization. Your donation will provide critical support for our Guiding Teachers, our Administrative Director, and our programing, building, and administrative expenses.

As we continue to emerge from three years of COVID times, Compassionate Ocean is working to regain the financial stability of previous years. **Your contribution will make a real difference.**

Let's continue to join together to nurture Compassionate Ocean as a broad-minded and openhearted community, focused on the central activity of awakening and transforming suffering.

Thank you for being part of Compassionate Ocean.

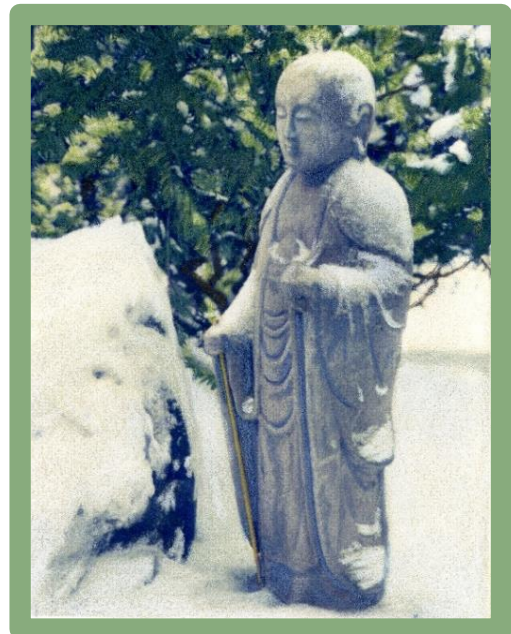
Deep bows,



Ramona Advani
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors



Mark Ostrander

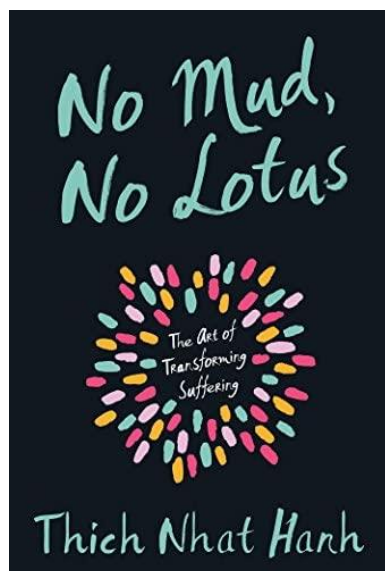


Jizo Bodhisattva
Photo by Rebecca Pavlenko

Your donation can be mailed in the enclosed envelope, or you can contribute online at www.oceanzen.org.
Compassionate Ocean Zen Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching

The Art of Transforming Suffering



If we take care of the suffering inside us, we have more clarity, energy, and strength to help address the suffering, violence, poverty, and inequity of our loved ones as well as the suffering in our community and the world....There is an art to suffering well. If we know how to take care of our suffering, we not only suffer much, much less, we also create more happiness around us and in the world.

—Thich Nhat Hanh (*No Mud, No Lotus*)

This course is part of a series exploring Thich (Thay) Nhat Hanh's presentation of core Buddhist teachings. The Noble Eightfold Path, the practice of transforming suffering, was presented by the Buddha at the beginning and throughout his teaching career, and is traditionally considered to have "set in motion the wheel of the Dharma." It explores the true nature of suffering and the path of practice that transforms it. Each class will include zazen (sitting practice), presentations by the instructors, and discussion.

www.oceanzen.org/buddhist-studies

Wednesdays, Jan. 18–Mar. 8, 7:00–9:00 P.M. (eight sessions) (#B104)

This course will be held in-person at the Center, with an option for remote participation via Zoom if requested.

Course fee: \$185 (\$165 members)

*Fee includes course text. Please deduct \$15 if you already have a copy of the course text **No Mud, No Lotus**. Reduced fees are offered as needed; please contact the Center to discuss.*

Note: The winter course will build on material presented in the fall course, which examined The Four Noble Truths as presented in the first section of the book *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* by Thich Nhat Hanh. If you did not take our fall Buddhist Studies Course, please register early so we can send you more information.

Taught by Guiding Teachers

Michael Genpo O'Neal and Joen O'Neal



Genpo and Joen are the Guiding Teachers of Compassionate Ocean Zen 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 in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction with Jon Kabat-Zinn. Joen and Genpo are ordained Zen priests. The Guiding Teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, please contact the Center.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

A Thorough Introduction to Mindfulness Practice

This program is a comprehensive, well-structured introduction to mindfulness practice in everyday life. It follows the nationally-acclaimed MBSR model developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, presenting mindfulness as a universal practice for people of any (or no) religious background.

Skills are introduced in class, practiced at home, and integrated to form new habits. The program enables participants to develop their own base in mindfulness integrated into everyday life, using the practices of:

- sitting meditation
- gentle yoga
- body awareness meditation
- daily-life applications of mindfulness
- stress and relaxation practice

What's included:

- an individual interview with the instructor
 - eight two-and-a-half hour classes
 - a six-hour Saturday retreat
 - a copy of the book *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
 - four mp3 guided meditations
 - weekly handouts

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

The course fee is \$350, which includes the above materials. Payment plans and limited need-based support are available. Gift Certificates are available. Please contact the Center to discuss.

Enrollment is limited, and pre-registration is required.



**Tuesdays,
Jan. 17–Mar. 7
6:30–9:00 P.M.
(eight sessions) (#611)**

**Instructor:
Michael O'Neal**



*This course will be offered **entirely on Zoom**.
(The Spring course will be entirely in person.)*

**Day of Mindfulness Retreat
Saturday, Mar. 4, 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.**

This retreat is part of the MBSR program and is included for all current participants in the MBSR course. It is also open to graduates of past Compassionate Ocean MBSR courses on a donation basis. People not enrolled in the current course should visit www.oceanzen.org/retreats to register.

What past participants have said about our MBSR Program

"This course helped me find tools and balance in a time in my life when I'm doing a lot of hard emotional work."

"The eight-week mindfulness class helped lower my stress and alleviate some pain issues. My mother was so impressed by the changes in me that she signed up too!"

"This course made me feel more comfortable maintaining a meditation practice, especially within a community setting. I in general feel calmer and am able to show up more fully throughout my life."

"Very, very meaningful and wonderful instructors and classmates. Life-changing experience."

Future MBSR Course Dates

**Mar. 28–May 16, 2023
(in person at the Center)**

www.oceanzen.org/mindfulness

New to Zen?

New people are always welcome to participate in the Center's activities; the boxed activities are designed especially for you!

Meditation & Dharma Talks

Most Sunday mornings throughout the year, Compassionate Ocean offers meditation practice (sitting and walking) followed by a Dharma talk and discussion. The talks focus on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life. Our practice is in the tradition of Soto Zen, with inspiration from the mindfulness practices of Thich Nhat Hahn. Everyone is invited to participate. There are no prerequisites or fees; donations are welcome. The Sunday gathering is co-led by Michael Genpo O'Neal and Joen O'Neal.

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

(In-person and via Zoom)

- 9:00 sitting
- 9:25 walking
- 9:35 sitting
- 10:00 dharma talk and discussion
- 11:15 ending

Welcome Sessions for New People

Guided meditation instruction and a Dharma talk oriented to those newer to Compassionate Ocean or Zen will be presented at these Sunday morning programs. These welcome sessions provide extra orientation and are a great time to bring a friend to attend the Sunday morning program for the first time.

(In-person and via Zoom)

- **Sunday, Jan. 22, 9:00–11:15 A.M.**
- **Sunday, Mar. 5, 9:00–11:15 A.M.**

Introduction to Zen Practice

Mini-Courses

- **Mondays, Jan 9 & 16, 7:00-9:00 P.M.**
- **Mondays, Mar. 13 & 20, 7:00-9:00 P.M.**

This is a two-session introduction to Zen meditation and related practices. It will be a combination of discussion about Zen and its place in Buddhism and human life, some information about Compassionate Ocean Zen Center, and instruction in sitting meditation. Guiding Teacher Michael O'Neal will lead this program, which is intended to be a starting point for those curious about or new to Zen. There is no fee.

To register: www.oceanzen.org/intro-to-zen

Weekday Morning Meditation

Five mornings a week, Compassionate Ocean hosts a forty-minute zazen (sitting meditation) period followed by a short chanting service. Everyone is invited to participate.

Monday–Friday, 7:00–8:15 A.M.

(In-person and via Zoom)

- 7:00 zazen (sitting)
- 7:40 chanting service
- 8:00 closing comments
- 8:15 ending



Sesshins (Retreats)

Participation in sesshin is open to community members and others who have some experience with Buddhist practice and meditation.

A *sesshin* (literally, “to gather the mind”) is a time when formal Zen practice is our primary focus. Sometimes these are informally called “retreats,” but in actuality they involve going forward into the heart of our lives. Each sesshin offers an extended opportunity to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. These are excellent opportunities to strengthen and deepen the practice of presence, including supporting and being supported by others.

Weekend Sesshins

- **Friday, Jan. 27, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Jan. 29, noon**
- **Friday, Feb. 24, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Feb. 26, noon**
- **Friday, Mar. 24, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Mar. 26, noon**

These weekend sesshins will include sitting and walking meditation, a Dharma talk, a work period, and an opportunity to meet with a teacher. Each weekend sesshin also includes three vegetarian meals on Saturday.

Fee: by donation.

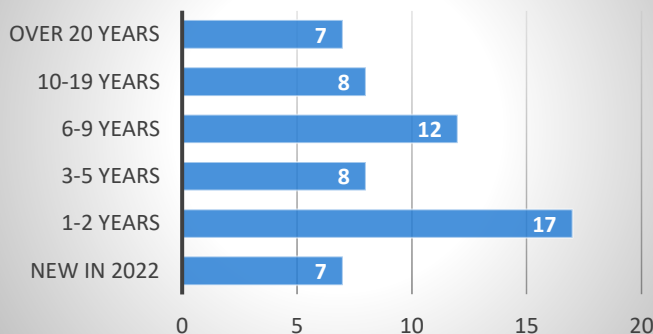
To register: www.oceanzen.org/retreats

Sustaining Member Appreciation

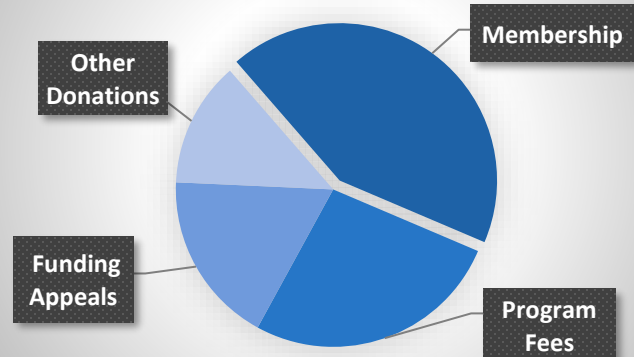
Sustaining Members provide the bedrock of support for our Center. **In 2022, 59 members** stepped forward in support of Compassionate Ocean. Of those, we welcomed **seven new members**. Plus, seven of our members have been **active for over 20 years!** As of November, membership contributions accounted for **43% of our total income**. **Thank you** to our new and long-time members!

Those wishing to become a member or renew their commitment of support are asked to fill out a pledge form each year. Pledge forms for 2023 will be mailed out early in the new year to current members. To become a Sustaining Member now, please visit www.oceanzen.org/membership.

Length of Membership



Income Type



In Remembrance



Kelly Reynolds (1945–2022)

Kelly began participating at Compassionate Ocean in 2000, taking our Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program to support

his work as a social worker. He became steadily more active (after first telling his son, “If it turns out to be a cult, pull me out”), becoming one of our most dedicated practitioners. Several years ago he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease, and was a teacher to us all as he navigated through deteriorating health with grace, humor, kindness, and continuing engagement. His Dharma name is Shonen—“Shining Perseverance.” The photo is of Kelly giving a Dharma talk at Compassionate Ocean in 2019.



Mary Jean Port (1954–2022)

Mary Jean practiced actively at Compassionate Ocean for several years until deteriorating health led her to retrench. She was a writer,

personally and professionally, and presented a writing workshop at Compassionate Ocean that was a highlight for all who participated. She had an irrepressible enthusiasm for the natural world, the beauty and wonder of everyday life, and the subtle depths of seeing what is. She deeply appreciated encountering the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. In one of her poems she wrote, “When people talk about God, they’re really talking about what wakes them up.”



Sangha members celebrating Genpo's Dharma Transmission.



Guests mingling at Joen's 80th birthday party.



Michael talking to guests at Joen's 80th birthday party.



Joen talking with Tomoe Katagiri, the widow of Katagiri Roshi.



Judith Ragir talking about her new book, *Untangling Karma*.



Sangha participants listening to Judith Ragir's Dharma talk.



Joen at the 100th Anniversary of Zen in America in L.A.



Rohatsu sesshin participants beginning an *oryoki* meal.



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center
652 17th Ave NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640
admin@oceanzen.org
www.oceanzen.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

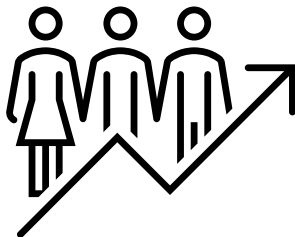
Get Involved

1

Participate in a
program at the
Center or via Zoom

2

Volunteer to help
with a project or
special event



3

Invite a friend to join
you, or tell them
about our Center

4

Make a
donation to our
Year-End Appeal

To report an address change, unsubscribe, or request an email version of the newsletter, go to www.oceanzen.org/mailings call 612-781-7640.

Mindfulness



Refer a friend to our Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program.

Many long-time community members discovered Compassionate Ocean through our MBSR program (formerly *Total Dynamic Living*). Referrals are a major way people hear about this exceptional course.

The Winter 2023 Course will be held entirely on Zoom, beginning January 17!

If you know someone **anywhere in the world** who might benefit from this course,
please encourage them to visit

www.oceanzen.org/mindfulness

(See page 4 for more information.)

Thank you!