



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

A Center for Mindful Living

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 56 • Fall 2021

The First Practice

Michael O'Neal

“Everlasting light” is constantly illuminating your life, but the stubborn human consciousness cannot believe it. So first we have to open ourselves to accept that light. Everyone always forgets this first practice.

—Dainin Katagiri, *The Light that Shines through Infinity*

Zen teachers are always working to express, simply and directly, what is most important. But it's not so easy.

We humans tend to rely on conceptual understanding as our pathway to the truth. Our ability to conceptualize, and the power this brings, is truly amazing. But this same ability tends to blind us to what is beyond, or before, conceptualizing. We also have a hard time seeing the limitations and distortions and inadequacies of a predominately conceptual approach to our lives.

One of the ways Zen teachers express insight is to use language—a conceptualizing function. But it's easy for language to fail to live up to our expectations. If something profound is expressed too simply, we tend to think, “Well, of course, I know that.” If it's expressed in detail, we tend to get bored and a little annoyed, to feel that it's all too complicated, and give up. Before long, even a lovely, fresh expression starts to feel clichéd and a bit stale.

Zen teachers often use language to help us get in touch with something beyond language. This is not the same as being hostile to language and thinking. It respects conceptualizing for its abilities in its proper sphere, but it also recognizes that this sphere is not as all-encompassing as it imagines itself to be. We want to become familiar with, and at home in, a way of being that isn't built on thought-constructions.

In the quotation above, Katagiri Roshi expresses, in his own way, a fundamental teaching of Buddhism. First, that “everlasting light” is constantly illuminating our life.” In Buddhist history this is sometimes called “intrinsic enlightenment.” We tend to think that “enlightenment” is something we don't have and want to somehow “get to”; but this teaching says we are already fully “enlightened.” How so? We are already completely infused with the energy of life, which we can provisionally call “everlasting light.” An enlightenment experience is one where we are not estranged from this aspect of the truth. If there's a dramatic shift from estrangement to non-estrangement, the enlightenment experience is vivid.

But Katagiri Roshi says, “The stubborn human consciousness cannot believe it.” Our usual way is estrangement. We are out of touch with the “everlasting light” that is “constantly illuminating our life.” “So first we have to open ourselves to accept that light.” How can we do this?

We can follow a conceptual path to a conceptual goal. Ultimately, this isn't satisfying, because we remain in a dream world, not yet “open to accepting.”

So, let's practice accepting. In this moment we can engage with things-just-as-they-are. This is the basic practice of zazen, but it is available at any time. It is the practice of enlightenment—opening to the “everlasting light that is illuminating our life.” This is Buddha's invitation to us.

But we (almost) always forget this first practice.

Fall Reopening and New Programming

COVID Protocols and Zoom Option

Programming will continue to be offered via Zoom this fall. We will offer the option to return in-person when it is safe to do so. Compassionate Ocean's COVID Advisory Committee is monitoring COVID-19 developments and health guidelines as we move toward reopening the Center. The Committee will determine appropriate protocols for in-person programming when it is safe to do so (please check OceanDharma.org for updates). Upon reopening, individuals who are unable to attend in-person are invited to participate via Zoom, which we plan to continue offering for most activities for the foreseeable future.

Special Reopening Event—*Date To Be Determined*

Once it is safe to do so, we look forward to celebrating with a special reopening event: a Sunday morning meditation gathering and Dharma talk. This event will also include a special refreshment treat and time to re-connect with each other after our long period of not being together in person. Visit OceanDharma.org for reopening updates.

Introduction to Zen Mini-Course

This is a two-class introduction to Zen meditation and related practices. This mini-course will be held on **Mondays, Sept. 27th & Oct. 4th** from **7:00–9:00 P.M.**, in person at the Center, health conditions permitting. 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. The classes are free; pre-registration is required. To register, please email admin@OceanDharma.org or call (612) 781-7640.

Open House

We look forward to celebrating the reopening of in-person programming at our Zen Center. Compassionate Ocean offers opportunities for meditation practice, weekly services, classes on Buddhist teachings, and secular classes on mindfulness. We invite you to join us **Sunday, October 17th** from **1:00–3:00 P.M.** at our Open House, health conditions permitting. Volunteers are invited to serve as hosts for this event, which will welcome newcomers and current participants alike back into our building. For more information, visit www.OceanDharma.org. We have an ADA accessible building.

- Tour the Center
- Learn about our programs
- Meet our guiding teachers and community members
- Greet your neighbors
- Enjoy refreshments



Guiding Teachers



Joen O'Neal and Genpo Michael O'Neal are the Guiding Teachers of Compassionate Ocean Zen 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 in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction with Jon Kabat-Zinn. Joen was ordained as a Zen priest by Katagiri Roshi in 1980 and received Dharma transmission from him in 1989. Michael was ordained as a Zen priest by Rev. Shoken Winecoff in 2018. The Guiding Teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, please contact the Center.



Fall Programs 2021

Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

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

Finding Ultimate Nature in Everyday Life

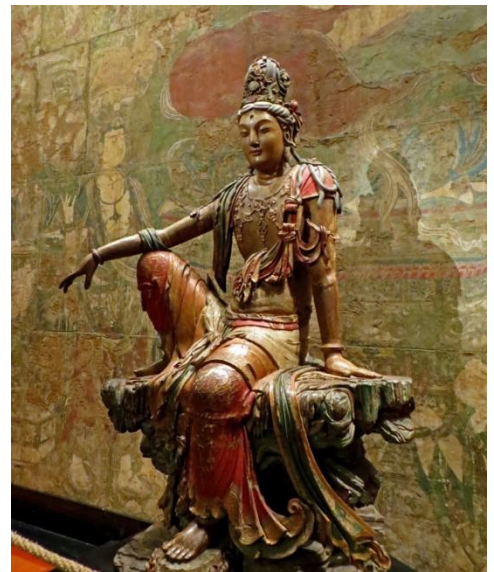
Taught by Michael and Joen O'Neal

Instead of going deep, human beings are always busy just on the surface of life . . . If you want to touch the depth of your life, let go of measuring and accept the great openness of your personality. How? Open yourself and invite Buddha. The main purpose of Buddhist practice is to invite the original nature of your existence—Buddha—into your everyday life . . .

—Dainin Katagiri, *The Light that Shines through Infinity*

This course will explore inviting the ultimate nature of human life into our actions of everyday living. Using a teaching of Katagiri Roshi, “An Invitation to Buddha,” we will examine:

- How a simple practice can provide a great opportunity to “invite Buddha”
- Aspects of Dharmakaya, the ultimate form of Buddha
- The Triple Treasure of Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
- Three bodies of Buddha



Our course text will be *The Light that Shines through Infinity*.

Wednesdays, Sept. 22–Nov. 10 (eight sessions) (#B99)

7:00–9:00 P.M.

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

(please deduct \$15 if you already have a copy of *The Light that Shines through Infinity*)

This course will be offered on Zoom, with an option for participants to return in-person when health conditions permit.

Member rates apply to members of all local Buddhist centers.

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

To register, go to **www.OceanDharma.org/buddhist-studies**

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 practice integrated into everyday life, using the tools 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. Contact the Center for details.

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

Enrollment is limited, and pre-registration is required.



Instructor: Joen O'Neal

Tuesdays, Sept. 21–Nov. 9 (#607)

6:30–9:00 P.M.

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis

Saturday Retreat

Saturday, Nov. 6, 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.

This retreat 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 contact the Center in advance to reserve a space.

The fall course will be offered on Zoom. As health conditions permit, an in-person option may be added for some activities as the course develops.

What past participants have said about our Introductory Program in Mindfulness

"I feel more relaxed and centered, more accepting of myself and others."

"The eight-week mindfulness class is an excellent way to both introduce and deepen this practice. It helped lower my stress and alleviate some pain issues. My mother was so impressed by the changes in me that she signed up too!"

"The meditation taught in this class is invaluable, ideally suited for those who are skeptical or new to meditation."

"One of the most important things I've done in years."

If you know someone who might benefit from this program, please share this information and direct them to

www.OceanDharma.org/mindfulness

Future MBSR Course Dates

- Jan. 18–Mar. 8, 2022
- Mar. 29–May 17, 2022
- June 7–July 26, 2022
- Sept. 20–Nov. 8, 2022

Meditation and 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; people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome. The Sunday gathering is co-led by Michael O’Neal and Joen O’Neal.

Sundays, 9:00-11:15 A.M. (currently via Zoom)

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

Weekday Meditation Sessions

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. There are no prerequisites; people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome. The weekday meditations are led by Michael O’Neal.

Monday–Friday, 7:00-8:00 A.M. (currently via Zoom)

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

Introduction to Zen Mini-Course

A two-class introduction to Zen meditation and related practices. Presented by Michael O’Neal. The classes are free; pre-registration is required.

Mondays, Sept. 27 & Oct. 4, 7:00-9:00 P.M.



Retreats

Health conditions permitting, these retreats will be offered at the Center.

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

A *sesshin* (literally, “to gather the mind”) is a time when formal Zen practice is the primary focus of what we do. Sometimes these are called “retreats,” but they actually involve going forward into the heart of our lives.

Weekend Sesshins

- **Friday, Sept. 24, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Sept. 26, 11:15 A.M.**
- **Friday, Oct. 29, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Oct. 31, 11:15 A.M.**

Led by Michael O’Neal & Joen O’Neal

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: \$50 (members \$45).

Rohatsu: Buddha’s Enlightenment Sesshin

- **Wednesday, Dec. 1, 7:00 P.M.–
Wednesday, Dec. 8, 11:00 A.M.**

Led by Michael O’Neal & Joen O’Neal

The December Rohatsu (“eighth day”) sesshin commemorates and reenacts the seven days of meditation culminating in the enlightenment of the Buddha, traditionally celebrated on Dec. 8. Rohatsu sesshins 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.

If this will be your first sesshin with us, please call Michael at Compassionate Ocean in advance to discuss. Full participation is encouraged; however, there is the option to register for one to seven days. Registration will open on November 1 with fees and registration information available on our website. Space is limited; early registration is encouraged.

www.OceanDharma.org/retreats

With Deep Appreciation

Through the generosity of donors and other friends over the past year, Compassionate Ocean has been able to keep its doors open, albeit virtually. **Thank you** to all who supported Compassionate Ocean in the past year by making a financial contribution. The following people and organizations made donations, either through membership pledges, year-end or spring appeals, designated giving, or general contributions.

In times like these we are reminded of our interconnectedness. We are deeply grateful for the strength of our community.

Joni Abramson & Dan Dudon	Ed and Bette Erickson	Larry Jeutter	Peter Nagell	Elizabeth Snyder & Chris Wolfe
Joseph Adler & Ruth Woehr	Marie Feldmeier	Andy Jones	Jeff & Becca Nelson	Marie Sorensen
Ramona Advani	Rev. Sosan Theresa Flynn & Rob Hubbard	John & Marilyn Kaman	Susan Nelson	Kenton Spading
Mark Tenshin Anderson	Noelle & Doug Follen	Keith Kennedy	Brian Nguyen	Ruth Spring
Jennifer Ashwill	Angelique Frederiksen & Sue Okerstrom	Amy Knox & Mark Edstrom	Michael Nystuen	Jody Stadler
Katheleen Avila	Bobbie Fredsall	Mary Knox	Joen & Michael O'Neal	Paula & Ron Staff
Tracy Baumann	Jan Freier	Robert Kokott	Peggy O'Neal	Michael Stanley
Kate Beddow	Bob & Karyn Fulton	Eliza Kraker	Rev. Ted O'Toole	Robert Steele
Susan Blom	Vicki Garlock	Jeff Kraker	Cody Oaks	Jan & Richard Sutton
Lisa Boesen	Rev. Dokai Georges	Rebecca Kraker	Susan Offerdahl	Kaia Svien & Bob Lyman
& Chuck Caldarale	Steve & Bonnie Goldsmith	Adam Kuenzel	Mark Ostrander	Regina Szabady
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Frank & Mary Broderick	Vince Grundman	Jeff Lanning & Laura Phillips	John Pikala	Susan & Dean Thomson
Dave Brus	Patty Guerrero	Kyle Larson	Kimberly Pollock	Donneen Torrey
Kathryn & Eric Byrd	Tom Gullett	Betty LaSorella	Rev. Norm Randolph	John & Mary Ursu
Joe Capistrant	Rev. Myo-O Habermas- Scher	Laura Lathrop	Scott Rattet	Rachel Seiren Vilsack
Jim Casebolt	Deb Haddock	Lee Lewis	Nancy Reiner	John Walbruch
Tyrone Cashman	Rev. Myo On Susan Hagler & Duane Peterson	Robert Lininger	John Renwick	Rev. Kelly Reynolds
Scott & Peggy Chapman	Kathryn Hammond	Ann Lumry	Rev. Josh Rice	Rev. Kyoku Walen
Clouds in Water Zen Center	Peter Hanks	Ann Mahoney	Jonelle Ringnald	Rochelle Weber
Rev. Jodo Cliff Clusin	Mary Harrington	Carol Malkinson	Alan Rodgers	J. Pamela Weiner
Nina Comiskey	Sue Harrington & Terry Miller	Lynn Marasco	Doan Roessler	Ben Weisner
Anne Condon	Steve Haskin	Don Martin	Rudina Parichay	Karen West
Rev. Shinsen Troy & Cathy Couillard	Kim Hellier-Kronebusch	Ava McCausland	John Russell	James Wichmann
Robert Croce	Jeff Holland	Judith McConnell	Gail Sabasko	Rev. Shoken Winecuff
Fran Cummins	Mark Horgen	Mary McCulley	Marcia Sanoden	Elektra Wrenholt & Adam Zahlner
Libby Donohue	Rev. Kikan Mike Howard	Tara Meade	Kevin Scattum	Joseph Zavoral
Kathy Dupre		Michael Millios	Mary Alice Sell	Anonymous
		Jeanette Mitchell	Annamay Snyder & Gregory Fall	
		Alex Murkve	Dale Snyder	

Community Announcements



Axel Theis Kraker
Born March 24, 2021
Axel Theis is the son of Rebecca and Samuel Kraker. Axel loves people and talking about his day at daycare with loud

coos and babble. At daycare he is known as "the doctor" because he just sits, smiles, and observes without ever fussing. He loves elephants and Daddy's fish tanks. He loves watching Mom cook in the kitchen, and listens mindfully as she explains each step. He also enjoys attending Buddhist Studies classes on Mom's lap.



Harriet O'Brian
(1939–2021)
Harriet was a devoted and sincere Zen practitioner from the time she first stepped into its stream. She

sincerely applied its practices and traditions to her daily life. Harriet received lay ordination from Joen on a beautiful, sunny day. She was given a Dharma name which meant *Fierce Tiger*—and she lived up to it. Three bows to Harriet, with deep appreciation for her living and dying fully. (submitted by her Dharma sister Paula Kalyana Staff)



Cal Appleby
(1933–2021)
Cal was important in the establishment of Zen in the Twin Cities. Cal was a leader in bringing meditation and yoga

into Minnesota prisons, including organizing local Zen practitioners to provide volunteer services. He was eclectic in his appreciation of many religious traditions. For many years he was a member of Compassionate Ocean to show his support; his main practice communities were the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and Dharma Field. Deep bows of gratitude.



Rebecca opens gifts on February 28th during a virtual baby shower following the Sunday Dharma talk.



Shoken Winecoff, Abbot of Ryumonji Monastery in Iowa, and Joen enjoy Dunning Springs in Decorah, Iowa while participating in a practice period at Ryumonji in June.



Participants in the summer Buddhist Studies course meet for their final class on July 28th.



Board members gather via Zoom in July for their monthly board meeting.



Tara sets up new laptop computers. This is part of a series of technology upgrades over the past year, including a new office desktop computer and improved internet connectivity.



Jeff, our dedicated groundskeeper, keeps our flowers alive in the summer and our sidewalk free of snow in the winter.



Alan and Ed continue their painting project at the Center. They have used the time of virtual programming to repaint much of the Center from bottom to top, including a new blue ceiling in the zendo.



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Stay tuned for reopening updates!

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Special Reopening Event

Date to be determined—please monitor our website

In-person meditation gathering and Dharma talk plus a treat and time to re-connect



Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course

Tuesdays, Sept. 21–Nov. 9, 6:30–9:00 P.M.

A thorough introduction to mindfulness practice



Finding Ultimate Nature in Everyday Life

Wednesdays, Sept. 22–Nov. 10, 7:00–9:00 P.M.

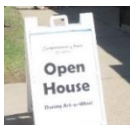
Buddhist Studies course exploring Katagiri Roshi's teaching, "An Invitation to Buddha"



Introduction to Zen Mini-Course

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Fall Open House

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Tour the center, learn about our programs, meet Guiding Teachers, greet your neighbors