



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

A Center for Mindful Living

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 62 • Fall 2023

What About Karma

Michael O'Neal

If you want to study Buddhism, please study Buddhism until it penetrates your life. Sooner or later, you'll understand. Buddhism is always focused on humanity...Whatever aspect of Buddhist teaching you pick up—impermanence, suffering, karma, or time and space, whatever it is—it's really universal. So from this point, I don't think the subject of karma is open only to Eastern people or particular peoples, but this is for all beings.

—Dainin Katagiri

Some years ago, I worked at a summer camp. The policy was that the campers could buy up to two candy bars a day at the trading post, but otherwise couldn't keep personal food. At a staff meeting one of the younger counselors wanted to know why. One of the older staff members tried to explain it from a couple perspectives, but the young counselor wasn't satisfied. Finally the camp director said, "It's just not a good practice." The young counselor accepted that, and the discussion moved on. This is a straightforward example of mindfulness of karma.

Karma is a word that travels around here and there in English. There are various ways to understand karma, some more appropriate than others. Originally a Sanskrit term, its basic meaning is *action*, and it is intimately tied to *karma-vipāka*, the fruits or results of our actions. The meaning here is that what we do, or fail to do, makes a difference.

In the *Upajjhātthana Sutta*, the Buddha recommends five remembrances as an ongoing practice. As translated by Thich Nhat Hanh, the final remembrance is, "My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground on which I stand."

Actions are of three kinds: those of body, speech, and mind. We typically think of actions in terms of body—what we physically act out. But our actions of speech are hugely consequential. It is remarkable how the sounds we make have such a powerful influence in shaping our world. And how we think (and feel) is a central part of karma. In the *Dhammapada* the Buddha says, "Phenomena are preceded by the heart [sometimes translated "mind,"], ruled by the heart, made of the heart. If you speak or act with a corrupted heart, then suffering follows you as the wheel of the cart, the track of the ox that pulls it. Phenomena are preceded by the heart, ruled by the heart, made of the heart. If you speak or act with a calm, bright heart, then happiness follows you, like a shadow that never leaves." (*translation by Thannissaro Bhikkhu*)

Buddhist teachings emphasize the critical role of *intention* in karma. Our intention is built on two foundational supports: the degree of our kind, compassionate heart, and the extent of our clear, insightful mind. At the deepest level, these are the same.

In Soto Zen Buddhism, a fundamental insight of Dogen Zenji is that practice and enlightenment are one and the same. We don't practice in order to become enlightened; our practice is the expression or manifestation of our awakened nature. *Bodhicitta*, the mind of awakening, is "something" we all have—or more properly, we all are. On the most basic level, this is the energy of life, and this is our karma.

Awareness of karma is awareness of the interconnected nature of all things—the way of non-separation. We take responsibility for how we manifest in the world, because that is the true expression of who and what we are.

Welcome to Compassionate Ocean

Open House

We warmly invite you to join us **Saturday, September 9th** from **1:00–3:00 P.M.** at our Open House, when we will celebrate the start of our Fall programs. Compassionate Ocean offers opportunities for meditation practice, weekly services, classes on Buddhist teachings, and secular classes on mindfulness.

Volunteers are invited to serve as hosts for this event, which will welcome newcomers and current participants alike. For more information, visit www.OceanZen.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



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. 11 & Sept. 18** from **7:00–9:00 P.M.**, in person at the Center. 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. This class is free; pre-registration is required. To register, please email admin@OceanZen.org, call (612) 781-7640, or sign up on our website (www.oceanzen.org/intro-to-zen).

Welcome Session

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

Sunday, September 17, 9:00—11:15 A.M.

In-person and via Zoom

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 Michael was ordained as a Zen priest by Rev. Shoken Winecoff in 2018. Both have received Dharma transmission. The Guiding Teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, please contact the Center.



Fall Programs 2023

Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

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

Taking Care of Karma

Katagiri Roshi's Lectures on Karma

Taught by Kikan Michael Howard

Karma as Buddha means that karma is really something helping you. You can learn about being human, and help all sentient beings.

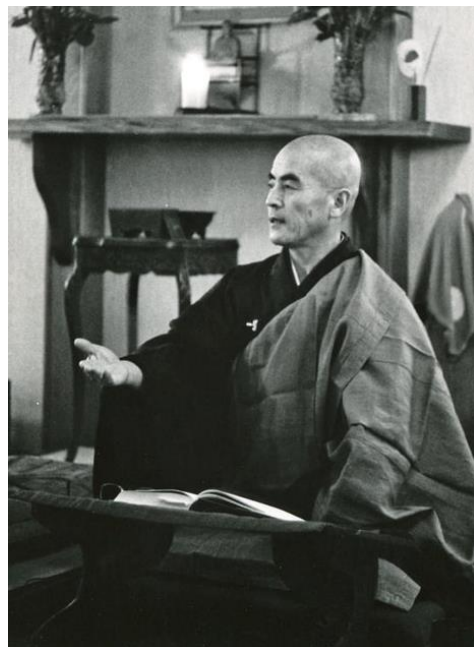
The statement karma is emptiness means that you can be brave. You can move toward the future, day by day, without being stuck in the "ghost" of karma. I don't mean you should ignore the result of what you have done; of course you should pay attention, because your actions leave something as an impression in your life. But nevertheless, you cannot be stuck there; you should move toward life in the future. You can move, day after day, in order [to] develop your life, in order to help all sentient beings according to Buddha's way. That is Right Effort.

—from "Karma: Conclusion," a 1980 Dharma Talk given by Dainin Katagiri Roshi

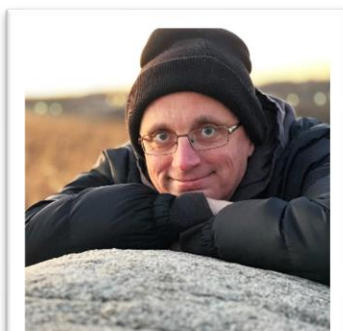
In 1980, Zen teacher Dainin Katagiri Roshi gave a series of talks explaining the Buddhist concept of karma to his American students. Karma was not well understood at the time, and in many ways, not well understood today. Karma is not simply action, or cause and effect; nor is it some kind of force that locks us into a certain destiny. According to Katagiri Roshi, karma is great energy that allows us to live, to relate to the world, and to move freely into the future. Karma is not just an aspect of Eastern philosophy; it is something which concerns all humanity.

In this class we will read and discuss transcripts of Katagiri Roshi's talks on karma.

The class will be led by Kikan Michael Howard, a Zen priest-in-training in Katagiri Roshi's lineage, who studies and transcribes Katagiri Roshi's talks on the Katagiri Transcripts website (katagiritranscripts.net).



Dainin Katagiri Roshi
(photo by Jim Dildine)



Kikan Michael Howard

Wednesdays, Sept. 20–Nov. 8 (eight sessions) (#B107)

7:00–9:00 P.M.

\$170 (members \$150)

This course will be offered in-person, with an option to attend via Zoom.

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.oceanzen.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: Lisa Mesick

Tuesdays, Sept. 19–Nov. 7 (#614)

6:30–9:00 P.M.

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis

Saturday Retreat

Saturday, Nov. 4, 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.

This course, including the retreat, will be offered in-person at our Center.

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.oceanzen.org/mindfulness

Future MBSR Course Dates

- Winter: Jan. 23–Mar. 12, 2024
- Spring: April 2–May 21, 2024

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. Join us in person or on Zoom. 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.

- 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.

Monday–Friday, 7:00-8:00 A.M.

- 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. 11 & 18, 7:00-9:00 P.M.



Retreats

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 Sesshin

• Friday, Oct. 6, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Oct. 8, 11:15 A.M.

Led by Michael O’Neal & Joen O’Neal

Weekend sesshins 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. By donation.

Rohatsu: Buddha’s Enlightenment Sesshin

• Friday, Dec. 1, 7:00 P.M.– Friday, 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 for Rohatsu sesshin will open on November 1 with fees and registration information available on our website. Space is limited; early registration is encouraged.

www.oceanzen.org/retreats

With Deep Appreciation

Through the generosity of donors and other friends over the past year, Compassionate Ocean has been able to offer classes, meditation sessions, Dharma talks and community gatherings. **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.

We are deeply grateful for the strength of our community.

Ramona Advani
Jennifer Ashwill
Peter Beckman
Michelle Mason Bizri
Lisa Boesen
& Chuck Caldarale
John Bohumil
David Brian
Frank & Mary Broderick
Clouds in Water Zen Center
Robert Croce
Brian David
Libby Donohue
Kathy Dupre
Ben Durrant
Ed and Bette Erickson
Marie Feldmeier
Rev. Sosan Theresa Flynn
& Rob Hubbard
Ken & Barbara Ford
Bobbie Fredsall
Jan Freier
Bob & Karyn Fulton
Ann Gilligan
John Gray
Vince Grundman
Chad Guerrero
Daniel Guerrero

Deb Haddock
Mary Harrington
Sue Harrington
& Terry Miller
Steve Haskin
Kathryn Hatch
Jeff Holland
Mark Horgen
Rev. Kikan Mike Howard
Nikia Jefferson
Andy Jones
Tia Karelson
Keith Kennedy
Amy Knox
& Mark Edstrom
Mary Knox
Jeff Kraker
Rebecca Kraker
John Kremer
Adam Kuenzel
Jeff Lanning
& Laura Phillips
Erin Larson
Laura Lathrop
Justin Lerohl
Anna Maravelas
Jennifer Marrone
Annie Klas Marsden

Bridget McGreevy
Kay McMahan
Tara Meade
Jeanette Mitchell
Alex Murkve



David Murphy
Michael Nystuen
Michael & Joen O'Neal
Peggy O'Neal
Cody Oaks
Henry Orme
Mark Ostrander
Rebecca Pavlenko
John Pikala
Joshua Reynolds
Jonelle Ringnalda

Kortni Ringwall
Julie Ritz-Schlaifer
Alan Rodgers
Doan Roessler
Rudina Parichay
John Russell
Anne Scherer
Brian Schubloom
Martha Sheppard
Mary Alice Sell
Dusty Smith
Greg Smith
Dale Snyder
Kenton Spading
Ruth Spring
Jody Stadler
Paula Staff
Michael Stanley
Jan & Richard Sutton
Kaia Svien & Bob Lyman
Regina Szabady
Susan & Dean Thomson
John & Mary Ursu
Rachel Seiren Vilsack
Rev. Shoken Winecoff
Steve Zieke

A Special Act of Generosity

This summer Compassionate Ocean received a deeply supportive contribution. An anonymous donor completely paid off the balance of our commercial loan, which was originally taken out to help finance our building renovation. Besides paying off the loan principal, this donation will save us many thousands of dollars in interest payments over the coming years. Our total remaining debt is now around \$13,000, owed to individual lenders who are scheduled to be repaid by the end of 2025.

A deep **thank you** to our anonymous donor.

September 24 Fundraiser for Michael's Trip to Japan

Please mark your calendars and join us on **Sunday, September 24** for a **Pie Auction and Fundraiser** for Michael's month-long trip to Japan in October and November! He will be performing *Zuise*, where he will be serving at both of the founding Soto Zen temples, Eihei-ji and Soji-ji, as Abbott for one day. This marks the next stage in his training as a priest in the Soto Zen Tradition. He will also be visiting and practicing at other Zen temples in Japan.



The Pilgrimage Pie Auction on Sept. 24 will be preceded by a short sitting as per our normal Sunday sangha. After this sitting, in lieu of a Dharma Talk, we will gather to socialize and bid on delicious homemade pies! Michael will also talk about his upcoming trip and his previous training in Japan in 1992.

You are cordially invited to come to the Center to bid on pies, make a donation, or just socialize and wish Michael well on his trip.

We are looking for volunteer bakers to make homemade pies or other auctionable tray-form baked goods.



If you have questions or would like to be involved, please contact Alex Murkve at alex.murkve@gmail.com (or 612-355-9939).

Our funding effort will help make Michael's journey as meaningful, and affordable, as possible. Any money raised in excess of actual trip expenses will go toward our year-end fundraising.

Our goal is to support Michael's journey by raising **\$8,800** – one hundred dollars for each of the eighty-eight Buddhist temples along the coast of Japan's Shikoku Island. Visiting these 88 temples is one of the world's foremost pilgrimage experiences. Michael's *Zuise* and related training is an auspicious pilgrimage of its own.

Summer Events



Above, left: Volunteers Alex Murkve and Rebecca Kraker at Compassionate Ocean's community outreach table at Northeast Farmer's Market this summer.

Above, right: Rev. Ejo McMullen, representing the North American Office of Soto Zen, gave the Dharma Talk at Compassionate Ocean on June 18th.



Left: Attendees of the July sesshin at Ryumonji Monastery in northern Iowa.



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admin@OceanDharma.org
www.OceanDharma.org

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— Now Hiring! —

Administrative Director

Compassionate Ocean is seeking a half-time Administrative Director to carry forward our mission by providing administrative leadership and support for our teachers, our members, and the greater community.

Apply your administrative and office skills in a supportive environment dedicated to helping others.

Interested? Learn more on our website (oceanzen.org/admin-director). Send resumé and cover letter to admin@oceanzen.org.



Fall Open House

Saturday, September 9, 1:00–3:00 P.M.

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



Introduction to Zen Mini-Course

Mondays, Sept. 11 & 18, 7:00–9:00 P.M.

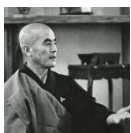
A two-class introduction to Zen meditation and related practices



Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course

Tuesdays, Sept. 19–Nov. 7, 6:30-9:00 P.M.

A thorough introduction to mindfulness practice



Taking Care of Karma: Katagiri Roshi's Lectures on Karma

Wednesdays, Sept. 20–Nov. 8, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

Buddhist Studies course exploring Katagiri Roshi's teachings on Karma



Pie Auction Fundraiser & Social

Sunday, Sept. 24, 9:00–11:15 A.M.

Socialize, bid on homemade baked goods to enjoy yourself or give as gifts, and support our Guiding Teacher's trip to Japan for the next stage in his training as a Soto Zen priest.