

## June 2014

Greetings!

It's almost summertime!! Things are really green here in Seattle. You can see why this is the Emerald City and Washington is the Evergreen State. People take their gardening very seriously here, and there are large, colorful flowers and plants all over town.

Things are still moving along quite well. There has been a very nice turnout for meditation at the detention center, and also at the community center. One of our senior members and his family have moved down to Olympia, but they will be coming up every few months for our family get together, which everyone seems to really enjoy.

I was going to address different aspects of our daily training, but after speaking to some of you, I thought I would elaborate on a topic from the last email. Let me further explain the metaphor of learning to swim, so one is able navigate in rough waters. Learning to swim refers to the training and meditation, while the rough waters is the welling up to the surface of emotions, spiritual pain, and general dis-ease that occur during stressful times in our lives.

I would like to give an example now of how the training and meditation helped me to get through some very rough waters. In 2001, I was diagnosed with a serious and possibly life threatening illness. When I went to the surgeon, I was already consumed by many emotions (fear, terror, grief, anger, etc.). The surgeon told me that he had to make a large incision from my chest down to the groin area, in order to remove what needed to be removed, and to take a very thorough look at the surrounding area. When he told me this, I turned white and was flooded with emotions. In the hospital, the night before the surgery, I experienced a really strong current of emotions (very rough water). I was having a very difficult time. Then I asked myself, why was I ignoring what I had been doing for the last eighteen years? I realized how important the training and meditation was to me at this point. I felt like I was swimming against a current, and had to tell myself that I must rely on the meditation. Eventually, as the meditation deepened, I found myself in that place of true peace, being embraced by the flow of the ever present love of the Eternal. I know this wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't had all those years of training under my belt. Looking back, what was one of the most difficult and painful times in my life, turned into one of the most beautiful times, full of love and peace. I am eternally grateful.

At this point, a teaching of Reverend Master Jiyu came up for me. It is from her Commentary on the Precepts. "The depth of the ocean is still even when there is a great storm upon its surface." In this one sentence it brings into focus that during times of crisis and great stress, one can turn to the still and ever present love of the Eternal.

A major purpose of this training is to help us deal with the difficult times in our lives. It works and it is not easy. I am speaking from personal experience here, but I know people who have undertaken the training and have succeeded. So, I just want to say to all to keep up your training and meditation. It does help!

In the next few emails, I will go into more detail of the daily training. For now, just try to keep your heart open at all times.

Take care,

Reverend Basil