

January 2021

Greetings,

It looks as if we can see the finish line with the virus. However, as marathoners say, the last few miles are the most difficult. My advice is to keep up your determination and diligence. Many took chances during the Holidays and they are now paying the price. Given the seriousness of this virus, it does not seem worth taking chances, especially when it affects both ourselves and others.

With the turbulence in our society at the moment, I am reminded how very, very helpful it is to be still and to not get pulled out of our daily meditation and training. When we get pulled out, we suffer. The stillness, pure love and compassion of the Eternal is always there for you. You just have to open yourself up to it.

I would also like to mention that at these times it is very important to be mindful of where your head goes, to be mindful of your thoughts. It is very easy for us to allow our head harden our Heart. This also causes suffering and dis-ease. To be mindful in this way takes much more resolve during times like these, but it is well worth it and it will greatly help you.

Below I am reprinting an article of mine and a poem by Geoff from the Serene Reflection Dharma Association newsletter.

Take care,

With all my Heart

Rev Basil.

Kaleidoscopes and Lava Lamps

Rev. Master Basil Singer

[Seattle Dharma Refuge](#)

When I first started training with the teachings of Rev. Master Jiyu, I realized that she frequently used the term “kaleidoscopic mind.” Rev. Master mentioned that we would find it helpful to develop this kind of mind and let it permeate through our attitude and actions in daily life.

At first, I had a hard time getting a feel for what she was pointing to. To start, I looked up what a [kaleidoscope](#) was: “a constantly changing set of colors and images” and “changing of phases or events.” What came up for me, then, was to work on being flexible and open to changeableness and not fight it with my own rigid ideas and opinions.

In a series of public lectures collected in *Roar of the Tigress, Volume I*, and monastic lectures collected in *Roar of the Tigress, Volume II*, Rev. Master provided more dimensions to what she meant. I find three of these teachings particularly helpful.

1. Kaleidoscopic mind is not flat and two-dimensional, it requires that you drop off either/or thinking and allow your mind to open to new ways—not just new ways of thinking but new ways of seeing and being.
2. When you realize the true extent of purity and stillness, you can realize your position in the scheme of things, and you know the awe-fullness of the Unborn. You “see” the world as if through an ever-changing kaleidoscope that can see the Eternal in everything.
3. To develop a more kaleidoscopic mind necessitates continually being willing to set aside the opposites that your thinking mind will present to you.

Rev. Master always said that, within all the changeableness in life, there is always the constant flow of the Eternal’s pure love, compassion, and nonjudgmental acceptance. This is our true refuge within all changeableness and impermanence.

Rev. Master had a [lava lamp](#) that, like a kaleidoscope, provides a graphic metaphor for changeableness within the Eternal. In a lava lamp are blobs of wax in a liquid medium. When heated by a light bulb, the blobs rise and fall and become ever-changing shapes. The liquid medium makes the changes possible, yet is not itself changed by them. This liquid medium is like the ever-present compassion, love, and wisdom of the Eternal within which all the changing conditions of our daily lives arise and pass. Usually, we are so focused on the “blobs” of change and impermanence in our lives that we fail to realize or appreciate the medium of compassion and love that supports them. When, through our training in meditation and the Precepts, our minds and hearts are opened to the Eternal, we discover a wealth of compassion within changing conditions. Then, as Rev. Master Jiyu said, “You ‘see’ the world as if through an ever-changing kaleidoscope that can see the Eternal in everything.”

Winter Night

Geoff Nisbet

Dissolving into a vast and supportive body of light
I bathe in the pristine luminosity of the present.
How unfathomably precious is even a single moment of this life,
How complete and magnificent the Lord.
There is no possibility of enhancing this perfection;
I wish only to be a vehicle for It.