

October 2022

Greetings,

It was a hot and dry summer here in Seattle, but it was great for the experiment of growing corn on my roof here in downtown Seattle. The corn has been delicious.

We have started to have our meditation meetings again here in Belltown. We are now meeting on Sunday mornings at 11am. All are welcome. Please get in touch with me for details if you are interested. Also Rev. Master Mokushin Hart is starting a meditation group in Poulsbo on the other side of the Puget Sound. Her meetings will also be on Sundays. For information, please email Rev Master Mokushin at mokuhart@yahoo.com.

Attached is an article I wrote for the Serene Reflection Dharma Association. The article is about a teaching that has been very helpful to me and many others. I feel it is a very good time to get into this teaching.

Hope all are doing well, take care.

With all my heart,

With bows,

Rev. Basil

The Middle Way

Rev. Master Basil Singer
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An old Buddhist teaching has been coming up for me that has always been a big help for me. It is the teaching of The Middle Way. This is the "third position" between extremes of self-denial (asceticism) and self-indulgence. The Buddha illustrated this principle with the "Parable of the Lute." In the story he points out that if the strings of a lute are strung either too tightly or too loosely, you cannot produce pleasing music. He then makes the connection to training, explaining that it is best done in a relaxed way without straining too hard or being slack in one's effort. In Zen is Eternal Life Rev. Master Jiyu defines the Middle Way as a "term for the dharma which teaches the middle way between over-indulgence and asceticism. The way of non-attachment."

We can fall into extremes of both attitude and action. Extreme negative attitudes cause us to become closed-minded and very opinionated. We slam the doors of our hearts and minds and lose sight of the Four Wisdoms of charity, tenderness, benevolence and sympathy. It puts blinders on the eyes of our hearts so that we cannot see the whole picture of what is going on.

Excessive self-indulgence is another way to go that is not helpful. We reach out and grab onto external things and experiences as outlets. This is the way that I have gone in the past and then I saw in my meditation and training that this did not work and was causing me suffering.

The only true and lasting antidote to our internal pain is pure meditation and mindful awareness of the Precepts. These practices deepen our understanding of what the Middle Way really is. We become more sensitive and aware of when we are overindulging in external distractions and blocking the flow of the compassion, love, and joy-filled stillness of the Eternal. Like a properly strung lute, our life can produce beautiful "vibrations" that lessen suffering and bring joy to ourselves and others.
