

December 2022

Greetings,

I hope all are doing well. I caught a strong case of COVID and I am still recovering. All the symptoms are gone but I am still a bit weak and fatigued. I can now see how strong this virus is. I feel the vaccines really helped me avoid getting dangerously ill.

At the end of the year I like to express my gratitude. First, I would like to thank those who edit and contribute to all that I write. Without them it would not be possible. I would also like to thank all who have supported me throughout the year. Without their support I would not be able to stay in Seattle and do what I do.

For those who would like to offer their support, the way to do it is to make out a check to "North Cascades Buddhist Priory" and at the bottom of the check where one states the purpose; put "Seattle Dharma Refuge". The check should be mailed to me at Rev Basil Singer, 2208 2nd Ave # 404, Seattle, WA 98121.

I have attached an article I wrote for the most recent newsletter of the Serene Reflection Dharma Association. It also expresses gratitude - the gratitude I have for the help of the Eternal, the practice and all those who help me.

I would like to wish everyone a very joyous holiday season and a very happy new year.

With all my heart,

Rev Basil

Taking Refuge Rev. Master Basil Singer **Seattle Dharma Refuge**

In Buddhism, "taking refuge" in the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is an important aspect of the practice. Indeed, without the Three Refuges, Buddhist practice is not possible.

A very relevant definition of *refuge* is: *a source of help, relief or comfort in times of trouble*, and this has been my experience of the Three Treasures, from the very beginning of my training. I don't often think consciously about "taking refuge," but I have come to realize that it is something I have been doing all along.

The first Refuge—the Buddha Treasure—is taking refuge in the Eternal, the Unborn, the Buddha Nature. Knowing that It is full of love, compassion without judgment, and that It is always there and will never hurt me.

The second Refuge is the Dharma Treasure. For me, it is the teaching that guides me back to my daily training and the ongoing flow of the Eternal when I wander off the Path of meditation and Precepts.

Finally, the Refuge of the Sangha Treasure is, for me, all the monastic seniors and teachers who have personally helped me in my practice. It is also my contemporaries who help just by doing the practice and meditating with me. When I have been having difficulties members of the Sangha have offered counsel and guidance and have been, recalling the above definition, *a source of help, relief or comfort in times of trouble*.

It is said that “faith” is a big help and important to our training. One definition of faith I feel that works is *belief that does not rest on material evidence*. This pertains to the faith I have always had that there is the Eternal, and the faith I have had that It is always my true Refuge. Also, I had faith that the teaching and teachers and the training would be of great help with my suffering and my daily life. The faith that this practice was good and right.

Over the years this kind of faith I had at the beginning turned more into certainty. And, I can see in retrospect how helpful the faith was in the beginning to set me on the Path of Buddhist training. I still take refuge in the Three Treasures and I can see very clearly that they are truly treasures.
