Good Energy from Within

January 17, 2023

During my first couple of years with Ajahn Phuong, there were two of us, two monks, who looked after him when he was sick. One time, the other monk decided he was going to try to help Ajahn Phuong through his meditation. So he focused his mind very strongly, tried to send a current of good energy in Ajahn Phuong’s direction. And it came back at him and made him sick. It taught me a lesson. When you’re trying to create a good environment for someone who’s sick, as you meditate, don’t focus things right at that person. Because there’s no telling whether your energy is actually going to be good for them or not. But try to make your mind as still as possible and radiate that stillness in all directions. So it’s not concentrated in any one direction, but it goes all around. That way you create a good environment for yourself and for the other person, one that’s not interfering, but one that is helpful. And as it turned out, I was the monk who ended up looking after Ajahn Phuong for the rest of his life. So when you have a relative who’s sick, or just a friend who’s sick, or someone who’s passed away, just think good energy. Try to create the energy in your body or adjust the energy in your body so that it’s good. Think of the breath coming in and out from all directions, and your good energy is going out in all directions. It’s like a protective cocoon. There’s another story I may have told you about the woman who was meditating and shaking a lot. And Ajahn Phuong noticed this. He had been told beforehand that this was going to happen. This woman had a friend who lived at the monastery, and the friend told Ajahn Phuong that this was a problem for a long time. Every time she tried to meditate, she would shake. So she came to visit. And sure enough, she was sitting and meditating in front of Ajahn Phuong and started shaking. Ajahn Phuong must have sensed something. He had a student who was quite psychic, and he said, “Check this woman out.” So the psychic woman meditated for a bit, and she saw these two creatures behind the woman shaking her violently. So in her vision, she tried to stop them. Well, they turned on her and scared her so much that she ran out and threw up. When she came back, she mentioned to Ajahn Phuong what she’d seen, and he said, “You fool, you’ve got to protect yourself before you deal with creatures like that. Fill your body with light as best you can, fill your body with good breath energy, and then spread goodwill in all directions. And that’ll be your protection.” So the woman did. And she saw the creatures again. So she talked to them after having spread goodwill. They asked, “Why are you shaking this woman?” They said, “She had been their daughter in a previous lifetime, and she killed them. They’re afraid that if she meditated, she’d get away without their getting their revenge.” So the woman said, “Well, what good is revenge? Why don’t you let her make merit and dedicate it to you? What would you want that she would dedicate to you?” They said, “Have her build a Buddha image.” So when Ajahn Phuong’s student mentioned this to him, he said, “Well, we can’t say anything to her about that. Otherwise it would be like using our powers just to gain money, gain donations.” Which is an important lesson. You don’t use your powers for those purposes. You have to use them solely to help other people, other beings, other people. Otherwise they backfire. But the important lesson here is that your protection lies in your goodwill. It lies in your full body awareness, in your full body breath. Because as you radiate good energy, bad energy can come in. So when you’re thinking of helping someone else, think in the same way. You’re creating a cocoon around that person with as much good energy as you can. The Thai Jhans talk a lot about the currents of the mind. And the word “current” in Thai has several meanings. One is like the current of a river. But they also use it to talk about radio waves going out. In this case, it’s a current that doesn’t go in one direction. It goes all around. So think of a current that goes all around. The currents of the mind do have their power. And the stronger your concentration, of course, the stronger the power will be. But you do want it to be healthy, which is why you have to be careful about concentrating it and focusing it just on one spot or on one person. This is one of the ways in which meditators help the world. You can think of all the bad energy that goes out of people’s minds when they’re overcome with greed, aversion, and delusion. It’s like there are radio towers broadcasting all kinds of garbage. So the world needs people who are broadcasting something good. And even if you’re not thinking consciously about trying to help somebody else, the fact that you’ve got your mind still, and your motivation here is basically goodwill, or trying to find happiness in a way that harms nobody, that’s an expression of goodwill. You’re contributing good energy to the world. And, of course, you don’t want to do that only when you’re sitting here with your eyes closed. Try to carry that attitude with you as you go through the day. When you have a sense of fullness, a sense of ease, well-being, through the breath, it’s a lot easier to think of other people’s well-being as well. And you have this energy from within. This is one of the most important lessons the Buddha taught us, how much energy we have that we’re using for the wrong purposes. If we use them for good purposes, we have these resources inside that we can develop. And it can take us far. So as you meditate, you’re broadcasting good energy. And it’s good, at the end of the meditation, to consciously think about that fact, that that’s the energy you want to carry into the world. That’s the gift from your meditation that you want to spread around.

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