

A Place to Place Your Mind

January 30, 2018

One of the chants we repeat every day is: “May all living beings look after themselves with ease.” And yet we all know that all living beings have aging, illness, and death. So what the chant means is: May all beings learn how to live with themselves, and look after themselves in the face of aging, illness, and death. In other words, may they have the necessary skills so that the mind doesn’t have to suffer from these things—so that when the body begins to deteriorate, the mind isn’t shaken by it. It makes whatever adjustments are needed to compensate for the fact that the body can’t do things it used to be able to do.

The same with illness. As for when death comes, you have to see it, as Ajaan Lee liked to say, as casting off an old set of clothes that’ve gotten so worn that you can’t use them anymore—nothing more than that. If we hang onto the body as us or ours, thinking that it’s got to be this way and got to be that way, we’re going to suffer for sure.

But if you learn to accept the way it is and learn to realize that there are skills you can develop in the mind that give you another place to place your mind—in other words, the good qualities you’ve developed inside—that way you won’t be thrown off balance. You’ll have another place to go deep inside the mind.

So this is a way that you show goodwill for yourself: by developing these qualities of mind. Even when the body’s still young and strong, you realize that the time is going to come when it won’t be young and strong anymore. And if it’s not young and strong anymore, you realize that “These are the qualities I need right now.” It adds an edge to the need to develop these qualities, to practice this way.

But the fact that there is such a way: That’s what *pasada* is all about, a sense of confidence that there really is a way out of this suffering that comes from latching on to the body. There really is a quality of the mind that can be developed and can lead you to even better qualities of mind that are there but can’t be found until you’ve developed the qualities of the path.

So you’re showing goodwill for yourself by enabling yourself to look after yourself. That way, you’re not placing a burden on others; you’re not placing a burden on your own mind—because you’ve got everything you need inside.