Guided Bodycare

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 29:40

Body care. Offering *mettā*, goodwill, loving-kindness to the body. Remember you can stop the tape any time to develop a particular section.

First we need to undermine the wrong relationship we have to the body. We think it to be me or mine. As we weaken this identity and possession, so we can develop a more wholesome, skillful relationship.

Working first with possession. We hold on to what we like, we discard, we don't look at what we dislike. Bringing to mind a part of the body that disgusts us to some extent, here's some of the Buddha's own list. Faeces, bile, pus, blood, sweat, fat, urine. Choose something, something to get in touch with, to feel that disgust.

Now change your perspective and see it from a biological point of view. Perhaps your feelings are changing to equanimity, even interest.

Now take a part of the body you dislike because it's ugly. Too thin, too fat, too long, too short, so on. Again, get in touch with that feeling of dislike. Beauty and ugliness come from the judgmental mind. Can't things be just okay as they are? See if you can turn towards those parts with the heart of acceptance.

Finally, there are those parts that bring us great pleasure. Take any of the five senses, for instance. Consider now suffering from an impairment or loss of one of them, say hearing or sight. As we know from people with disabilities, it doesn't mean we couldn't live equally fulfilling lives. So we can see that such suffering comes from attachment.

Now let us work a little with the delusion of identity. Here we can use the three contemplations that awoke the Buddha-to-be to his search for the end of suffering. Repeating each phrase in the heart and accepting its truth value.

First, to undermine our obsession and intoxication with health. This body is subject to disease. This body is of a nature to fall ill. This body has not gone beyond sickness.

Now to undermine our obsession and intoxication with youthfulness. This body is subject to aging. This body has not gone beyond aging. This body is now in a process of aging.

And now to undermine our obsession and intoxication with life itself. This body is subject to death. This body has not gone beyond death. This body will die.

Having undermined to some extent the wrong relationship we have to the body, we can now develop a

right relationship. The Buddha said this was a precious rebirth. Here we experience joy and woe and we have the intelligence to rise above them.

Firstly, we can't be here without a body. It's as simple as that. Secondly, it's through the senses that we experience the world and learn. Thirdly, it's through the body we relate, communicate and express ourselves. And finally, in this tradition, it's through the very breath of the body that we can develop the spiritual faculties.

Once we realise how precious the body really is, we can't but want to care for it. Now, we haven't done so in the past, so before we can offer it, loving kindness, let us apologise for all the rough times we've given it and perhaps are still giving it.

Whatever harm I have done to you in thought, word and deed, by way of greed, hatred and delusion, intentionally or unintentionally, I'm heartily sorry for it, and I determine from this day on to treat you with due care and respect.

So now we can begin to offer our blessings to the body. Choose a phrase which expresses for you healing or well-being. Place it in the heart and offer that blessing to the whole body. Now it may be that you see light or feel heat, all well and good, but there's no need for such manifestations as such. What is working for us is our acts of will, our intentioned intentions.

So now let's take our time and go through the whole body from the top of the head to the tip of the toes. Starting at the hair and scalp, offer your blessings there. Come down into the brain and fill it with loving-kindness. Bless your eyes and your ears. Bless your nose and nasal cavities. Bless your mouth with its tongue, teeth, lips. The jaw. Pour your blessing into your throat, the precious voice box, so that the whole head feels warmed and energised. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Turning our attention now to the top of the spine and make your way down, offering each vertebrae your blessing. Come down the neck, down the back, down the small of the back, down to the very tip, so the whole spine feels warmed and energized. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Starting at the left shoulder, massage it with loving kindness. And make your way down towards the elbow. Down towards the wrist. And into the hand. Massage your hand with warm loving kindness. So the whole arm feels warmed and energized. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Moving to the right shoulder. Again, massage it with loving kindness. Making our way down to the elbow. Down to the wrist, and into the hand. Massage your hand with warm, loving kindness. So the whole arm feels warmed and energized. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Turning our attention now to the chest area. Now you can either offer your blessings to particular organs or you can just fill that felt space with loving-kindness. So the whole chest feels warmed and energized. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Moving down to the midriff, the stomach area. Again, fill that area with warm, loving kindness. So the whole area feels warmed and energized. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Moving down into the abdomen with all its varied systems. Offer your blessings there. Fill that area with warm, loving kindness. Though the whole area feels warmed and energized, may you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Moving to the left hip. Massage it with loving-kindness, making our way down to the knee and down to the ankle and down to the foot. Massage your foot with warm, loving kindness. So the whole leg feels warmed and energized. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

Moving to the right hip. Offer your blessing there. And making your way down to the knee. And down to the ankle. And into the foot. Massage your foot with warm loving kindness. So the whole leg feels warmed and energised. May you be free of sickness and disease. May you be well and strong.

So now we fill the whole body with warm blessings. Now perhaps there's a part of the body that needs special attention. Go there now and spend a while filling that area with goodwill, loving-kindness.

So now it's time to open ourselves up to whatever source of energy there is in the universe, using a method taken from the Tibetan tradition of the Medicine Buddha. Imagine there's a golden light descending upon you from above. Remember, any colour will do, which you feel is healing or energizing. And as it pours down, it begins to form a ball just above your head. Don't worry if the image is not strong.

Let it pour down until the ball takes on the feel of warm water, the consistency of warm water, and it slowly begins to rotate on itself. Still pouring down from above, the ball gets heavier, and we can begin to feel it upon our scalps.

Let it slowly descend down through the scalp, gently rotating, feeling it over the forehead and the back of the head, descending into the brain, filling it with that warm, vibrant energy. Feel it enter into our eyes, and ears. Feel its energy and warmth entering into your nose and nasal cavities. Slowly, gently rotating. Still pouring down from above. And we can feel its energy now entering into our mouths. Filling our mouths with its warm golden energy. Down into the jaw. Still pouring in from above, the ball gently rotating. And we can feel its warm, golden, vibrant energy filling our throats. The whole head is now this golden ball, gently rotating, full of energy, warmth.

Still pouring down from above, we can feel it beginning to spread over our shoulders and continuing to rotate, gently sinking into our chest, deep into our arms, deep into our chests, filling that whole area with

warm golden delight.

And it's still pouring down from above, down through the head, down the throat, into this ball gently rotating around our chest. And it continues downward, filling the rest of our arms, down to the elbows, filling that whole midriff, the stomach, that whole area, filling it with this warm golden delight.

Still pouring down from above, down through the head, down the arms, down the throat, down the chest, into this ball, gently rotating around our stomach. And it continues to go downwards, gently turning, filling the whole abdomen with its warm, golden delight.

Still pouring down from above, down through the head, down the throat, down the arms, down the chest, through the stomach into this ball, gently rotating around the abdomen. And we feel it descending, filling our hands, filling our hips, gently filling those areas with warm, vibrant, golden energy, spiralling downwards, slowly. We can feel it entering our knees, downwards until we can feel it around our feet. Filling our feet with its warm golden energy.

Still pouring in from above. Down through the head, down the throat, down the arms. Down through the chest, through the stomach, into the abdomen, down through the hips and legs, into this ball, gently rotating around our feet.

So now we can use this energy. With the in-breath, draw that energy, with our own energy, up the spine to the top of the head. And there, let it join with all that energy still pouring down from above. And with the out-breath, let it all cascade down the body. Just breathing in and up, breathing out and down. Just breathing in and breathing out. And if there's a part of the body that needs special attention, let it pass through that part like water through a sponge.

So now we can share this energy with individuals by bringing people to mind and offering them our blessings.

And finally, we can offer our blessings to all beings in all directions. Just breathing in, into the heart and breathing out to all beings.

May all beings be free of physical pain. May all beings be free of mental distress. May all beings be liberated of all their suffering. May all beings be well and strong. May all beings treat their bodies wisely. May all beings strive diligently for their liberation. May all beings experience the peace and bliss of Nibbāna.

Sābe satā sukhitā hantu. Sābe satā sukhitā hantu. Sābe satā sukhitā hantu.

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