



The healing quality of flowing water...
Espaco Azul, Brazil 2011

Awakening to Sanity (letter 5)

Taking good care of the Body

Dear friend,

It is of great importance to take good care of our body as we proceed on our spiritual journey; as the saying goes: „a healthy mind is found in a healthy body“. As we start on our journey we might still be young and often we are so enthusiastic that we might neglect our body for years to come, because we feel that only working with our mind is what counts. Well, this is not true. The pay off for this misunderstanding and laziness concerning the body comes later when we reach an age that will show the abuse and non-use of our body. We will be weak, our digestion is not functioning properly, we might be over-weight, have headaches and skin problems, our articulations are hurting, and our body becomes an early burden to ourselves and others. On top of the natural aging process we are struck by avoidable (!) additional problems due to not eating properly and not having had enough balanced, continuous physical exercise throughout the years. We are far from feeling our body to be the “palace of the deity” – or we can feel that only as long as we do not move...

What to do? Let’s not be lazy! Let’s apply in action all of what we know and feel is good for our general health. Remember that the Buddha as well as all the masters of the past lived in close contact with nature. Just going for a pee was already a walk in nature, not to speak of collecting alms in Tibetan valleys which were then carried up the mountain to stay in retreat. We have this wrong idea of immobile yogis sitting in mountain caves or in retreat huts; actually they had good quality of unadulterated food, full of energy, and – whenever they moved – they had to use their own feet and not cars. Think about it, and do not take as your immediate example those yogis who were absorbed in deep meditation in walled-in caves with their energies flowing completely free. That’s for very advanced practitioners.

Taking proper care of ourselves is the best health insurance. Stay fit – and regain your fitness in case you have lost it. No one else is to blame than ourselves if we show the many signs of so-called “civilisation diseases” which are actually just the sign of a sedentary life accompanied by lack of wisdom (and compassion for ourselves!). To put it boldly from my

own experience: When I had my slipped disc problem ten years ago with day-and-night pains for eight month I saw how stupid I had been not to take proper care. Yes, let's not be so stupid; let us not hide behind unwarranted excuses like saying "biological food is too expensive" while we are paying substantial amounts for going out to restaurants, for medicines, computer toys etc. Let us also not pretend that we "do not have enough time" to take care of our body because we will be obliged to "take the time" once we are sick or dead.

I avoid to give direct advice to anyone on what to do and what not to do; I merely wish to point out that the responsibility is with ourselves and that it is a sign of wisdom and compassion to take care to live long in a body that is kept in good shape (within the range of our possibilities) and which will serve ourselves as well as all those around us. Then our body truly becomes the residence and expression of awakened wisdom. I already hear the lazy ones say: "But Lhundrup, let's not fall into the other extreme of over-cherishing the body." Well, this is not the point; just take good care so that your meditation is easier and that you can fulfil your aspirations to help others for a long time.

All the best to all of you,

Tilmann Lhundrup