

Protected by Goodness

July 28, 2016

Every day we chant, “May I be happy. May all beings be happy.”

As the Buddha said, that’s our protection. It protects us against doing unskillful things. In that way, it protects other people too. Of course, it can’t protect them from all the dangers of their own past karma. But at the very least it means that our present karma poses no danger to them.

So when we repeat that phrase, we want to think about its implications. What does it mean? How does it mean that we’re going to have to act? How are we going to speak? How are we going to think? That’s our protection.

As the Buddha said, you can have an army protect you, but still, if you’ve got bad karma, the army is no use. It’s your good karma that protects you.

In Thailand often people will go to the monastery on their birthdays and ask for a blessing. Chao Khun Nor, who was a famous teacher in Bangkok, would often say, “Do good. That’s your blessing. You give a blessing to yourself.” The monks are happy to chant the blessings for you, but the real blessing comes from when you do things that are skillful.

So think today about the skillful things that you can do, especially when you work with your mind. As the Buddha said, you focus on the present moment and make sure that whatever’s unskillful in there, you let it go. Whatever’s skillful, you encourage. That’s an auspicious day.

The auspiciousness of the day doesn’t depend on the stars, it doesn’t depend on other things outside. It depends on what you’re making of the day. So even if unpleasant things come in by your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, you learn how to turn them into something good. They become fertilizer for the good qualities of your mind. As for the good things, they’re like water that comes and nourishes your mind. So, good or bad, whatever comes in, you can use it to develop good qualities.

In this way, you not only have protection but you also have wealth inside. That’s another analogy the Buddha gives. He says your goodwill—as long as it’s universal—is your wealth. So you’re protected, you’re wealthy, you’re strong. All these things come from developing goodwill.

And make sure that it’s not just a thought, that it’s actually the motivation you carry through the day, so that your presence in the world is a blessing to the world. When you’re giving blessings like that, you too are blessed.