

Sitting like the Buddha

Thich Nhat Hanh -Touching the Earth

Lord Buddha, I truly want to sit as you sat, with my sitting posture still, solid, and powerful. As your disciple, I also want to have your composure. I have been taught to sit with my back upright and relaxed, my head a straight continuation of my spine without leaning forward or leaning backward, my two shoulders relaxed, and one hand placed lightly on top of the other. I feel both solid and relaxed in this position. I know that in my own time most people are too busy and very few have the opportunity to sit still with inner freedom. I vow that I shall practice sitting meditation in such a way that I experience happiness and freedom while sitting, whether I sit in the full lotus, the half lotus, or on a chair with my two feet placed flat on the earth. I shall sit as someone who has freedom. I shall sit in such a way that my body and my mind are calm and peaceful. With mindful breathing I shall adjust my posture, helping my body to be calm and at ease. With mindful breathing I shall recognize and help to calm down feelings and emotions. With mindful breathing I shall light up the awareness that I have all the conditions necessary to unite body and mind and to give rise to joy and happiness. With mindful breathing I shall look deeply into my perceptions and other mental formations when they manifest. I shall look deeply into their roots so that I can see where they have come from.

Lord Buddha, I shall not look at sitting meditation as an effort to constrain body and mind, or as a means of forcing myself to be or do something, or as a kind of hard labor that will bring happiness only in the future. I vow to practice sitting in such a way that I nourish myself with peace and joy while sitting. Many of my blood ancestors have never been able to taste the great happiness of mindful sitting and I vow to sit for those ancestors. I want to sit for my father, mother, brothers, and sisters who do not have the fortune to be able to practice sitting meditation. When I am nourished by my practice of sitting meditation, all my ancestors and relatives are also nourished. Every breath, every moment of looking deeply, every smile during the session of sitting meditation can become a gift for my ancestors, my descendants, and for myself. I want to remember to go to sleep early so that I can wake up when it is dark and practice sitting meditation without feeling sleepy.

When I am eating, drinking tea, listening to a Dharma talk, or participating in Dharma discussion, I shall also practice sitting solidly and at ease. On the hill, on the beach, at the foot of a tree, on a rock, in the guest room, on the bus, in a demonstration against war, or in a fast for human rights, I shall also sit like this. I vow that I shall not sit in places of unwholesome activity, in places where there is gambling and drinking, in places where people are fighting, arguing, blaming, and judging others, except when I have made the deep vow to come to those places to rescue people.

Lord Buddha, I vow that I shall sit for you. Sitting with a deep serenity and solidity, I shall represent my spiritual teacher, who has given me birth in the spiritual life. I am aware that if everyone in the world.