

Fourteen Verses on Meditation

Written by Thich Nhat Hanh

1. Like the two wings of a bird,
the practices of stopping (*shamatha*) and looking deeply (*vipashyana*)
rely upon each other
and belong together, side by side.
2. The practice of shamatha is to stop,
so that I may recognize and touch,
nourish and heal,
settle down and concentrate.
3. The practice of vipashyana is to look deeply
into the nature of the five skandhas,
so that I may develop understanding
and transform suffering.
4. My breathing and my steps
enable me to generate the energy of mindfulness,
so that I can be aware of and touch
the wonders of life within and around me.
5. Calming body and mind,
receiving nourishment and healing,
protecting my six senses,
I maintain concentration.
6. Looking deeply into the heart of reality
to see the true nature of things,
practicing vipashyana enables me to let go
of everything I am searching for, my desires, and my fears.
7. Dwelling peacefully in the present moment,
transforming habit energies
gives rise to understanding,
freeing me from afflictions and pain.

8. Impermanence is one with nonself.
Nonself is one with interdependent origination,
is one with emptiness, is one with conventional designation,
is one with the middle way, is one with interbeing.

9. Emptiness, signlessness, and aimlessness
liberate me from suffering,
so that in my daily practice
I am not caught in mere intellectual understanding.

10. Nirvana is nonattainment.
Sudden or gradual enlightenment are not different.
True realization is to live in freedom
right now in this moment.

11. The essential sutras, such as the
Discourses on the Full Awareness of Breathing and the Four
Establishments of Mindfulness,
show me the path to transform body and mind,
step by step.

12. The Mahayana sutras and teachings
open many fresh, wide gateways
allowing me to enter the depths of the stream of meditation
flowing from the Original Source of the Buddha's teachings.

13. Not discriminating
between the practice offered by the Tathagata and that of the ancestral
teachers,
the Four Noble Truths perfectly interwoven
should serve as the foundation of an authentic transmission.

14. Supported by the Sangha Body
my practice flows easier,
allowing me to swiftly realize
my great determination to love and understand all beings.