



## Five Prayers, by Thich Nhat Hanh

IN GRATITUDE, I BOW TO ALL GENERATIONS OF ANCESTORS IN MY BLOOD FAMILY.

I see my mother and father, whose blood, flesh, and vitality are circulating in my own veins and nourishing every cell in me. Through them I see my four grandparents. I carry in me the life, blood, experience, wisdom, happiness, and sorrow of all generations. I open my heart, flesh, and bones to receive the energy of insight, love, and experience transmitted to me by my ancestors. I know that parents always love and support their children and grandchildren, although they are not always able to express it skillfully because of difficulties they encounter. As a continuation of my ancestors, I allow their energy to flow through me, and ask for their support, protection, and strength.

IN GRATITUDE, I BOW TO ALL GENERATIONS OF ANCESTORS IN MY SPIRITUAL FAMILY.

I see in myself my teachers, the ones who show me the way of love and understanding, the way to breathe, smile, forgive, and live deeply in the present moment. I see the Buddha or Christ or the patriarchs and matriarchs as my teachers, and also as my spiritual ancestors. [...] I open my heart and my body to receive the energy of understanding, loving kindness, and protection from the Awakened Ones, their teachings, and the community of practice of many generations. I vow to practice to transform the suffering in myself and the world, and to transmit their energy to future generations of practitioners. My spiritual ancestors may have had their own difficulties and not always been able to transmit the teachings, but I accept them as they are.

IN GRATITUDE, I BOW TO THIS LAND AND ALL OF THE ANCESTORS WHO MADE IT AVAILABLE.

I see that I am whole, protected, and nourished by this land and all the living beings that have been here and made life worthwhile and possible for me through all of their efforts. I see Chief Seattle, Thomas Jefferson, Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., and all the others known and unknown. I see those who have worked hard to build schools, hospitals, bridges, and roads, to protect human rights, to develop science and technology, and to fight for freedom and social justice. I see myself touching my ancestors of Native American origin who have lived on this land for such a long time and know the ways to live in peace and harmony with nature, protecting the mountains, forests, animals, vegetation, and minerals of this land. I feel the energy of this

land penetrating my body and soul, supporting and accepting me. I vow to cultivate and maintain this energy and transmit it to future generations. I vow to contribute my part in transforming the violence, hatred, and delusion that still lie deep in the consciousness of this society so that future generations will have more safety, joy, and peace. I ask this land for its protection and support.

**IN GRATITUDE AND COMPASSION, I BOW DOWN AND TRANSMIT MY ENERGY TO THOSE I LOVE.**

All the energy I have received I now want to transmit to my father, my mother, everyone I love, and all who have suffered and worried because of me and for my sake. I know I have not been mindful enough in my daily life. I also know that those who love me have had their own difficulties. They have suffered because they were not lucky enough to have an environment that encouraged their full development. [...] I want all of them to be healthy and joyful. I pray that all ancestors in my blood and spiritual families will focus their energies toward each of them, to protect and support them. I am one with those I love.

**IN UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSION, I BOW DOWN TO RECONCILE MYSELF WITH ALL THOSE WHO HAVE MADE ME SUFFER.**

I open my heart and send forth my energy of love and understanding to everyone who has made me suffer, to those who have destroyed much of my life and the lives of those I love. I know now that these people have themselves undergone a lot of suffering and that their hearts are overloaded with pain, anger, and hatred. [...] I pray that they can be transformed to experience the joy of living, so that they will not continue to make themselves and others suffer. I see their suffering and do not want to hold any feelings of hatred or anger in myself toward them. I do not want them to suffer. I channel my energy of love and understanding to them and ask all my ancestors to help them.