

**STEPPING INTO FREEDOM  
MINDFUL MANNERS  
Thich Nhat Hanh**

**Listening to the Teachings**

Listening to a Dharma talk is an important part of the practice. When you hear the bell announcing the talk, go directly to the Dharma Hall so you can take your seat before the teacher arrives. If you need to use the toilet, do so before coming to the Dharma Hall so you do not have to leave during the talk. When you arrive in the Dharma Hall, sit up in a straight but relaxed way, as in sitting meditation. Do not talk to or write messages to anyone, unless it is urgent.

While listening to the teachings, do not try to accumulate knowledge. If you listen to a talk with only your intellect, comparing what you hear to what you already know, the Dharma rain will not penetrate the earth of your mind. Allow the teacher's words to enter deeply into your store consciousness, where they can touch the seeds of wisdom and compassion that are already there. Many people experience a breakthrough in understanding while listening to a Dharma talk. If you put your energy into writing down the teacher's words, you may miss the chance to receive directly what is being said. If you are afraid you might miss something, listen to the tape later. If you need to take notes, write down only what is most important.