

The Blooming of a Lotus

#5 Taking refuge

1. Breathing in, I go back to myself.

Breathing out, I take refuge in my own island.

Going back My own island

2. Breathing in, Buddha is my mindfulness.

Breathing out, my mindfulness shines near and far.

Buddha is mindfulness Shining near and far

3. Breathing in, Dharma is my conscious breath.

Breathing out, the conscious breath protects my body and mind.

Dharma is conscious breath Protecting body and mind

4. Breathing in, Sangha is my five skandhas.

Breathing out, my skandhas practicing in harmony.

Sangha is five skandhas Practicing in harmony

Although this exercise can be used anywhere and at any time, it is especially useful when we find ourselves in a state of anxiety and agitation and do not know what is best to do. It is a means of finding refuge through the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. When we practice this exercise, it takes us directly to a place of peace and stability, to the most calm and stable place we can go. Buddha taught: "Be an island unto yourself. You should take refuge in yourself and not in anything else." This island is right mindfulness, the awakened nature, the foundation of stability and calm that resides in each of us. This island is right teaching, which shines light on the path we are treading and helps us to see what we need to do and what we should not do. Finally, this island is also the Sanghakaya (community body). In each member of the Sanghakaya, the five skandhas, elements of body and mind, need to be in accord with each other. That is, our own skandhas must be in harmony before we can live in harmony with others. When the five skandhas are in harmony, then naturally there will be the right action that brings peace. We will find that the nervous system and heart rediscover their evenness and their calm. Conscious breathing itself brings about this evenness. If we can become aware that we are doing what is most appropriate in our moment of need, we shall see that we no longer have any reason to be anxious or agitated. Is there anything better we could possibly do than that?