

# The Five Earth-Touchings

*The following service is edited slightly from the practices of the Plum Village tradition (<https://plumvillage.org/key-practice-texts/the-five-earth-touchings>), following in the spirit and example of the Plum Village Fourfold Sangha and the Arise Sangha (<https://arisesangha.org/resources/touching-the-earth/>).*

[We form two lines facing each other. The large bell is invited three times. When the small bell is then invited, we bow to each other. We then turn, bow to the Buddha, and sit down. *Please enjoy waiting together for the bell to finish ringing throughout the service.*]

## The Refuge Chant

*Leader:*

Incense perfumes the atmosphere.

A lotus blooms and the Buddha appears.

The world of suffering and discrimination is filled  
with the light of the rising sun.

As the dust of fear and anxiety settles,  
with open heart, one-pointed mind,  
I turn to the Three Jewels.

[bell]

*Reader 1:*

The Fully Enlightened One, beautifully seated,  
peaceful and smiling,

a living source of understanding and compassion:

To the Buddha I go for refuge.

[bell]

*Reader 2:*

The path of mindful living,  
leading to healing, joy, and enlightenment,  
the way of peace:

To the Dharma I go for refuge.

[bell]

*Reader 3:*

The loving and supportive community of practice,  
realizing harmony, awareness, and liberation:

To the Sangha I go for refuge.

[bell]

*Reader 4:*

I am aware that the Three Gems are within my heart.

I vow to realize them,

practicing mindful breathing and smiling,

looking deeply into things.

I vow to understand living beings and their suffering,

to cultivate compassion and loving kindness,

to practice joy and equanimity.

[bell]

*Reader 5:*

I vow to offer joy to one person in the morning,

to help relieve the grief of one person in the afternoon,

living simply and sanely with few possessions,

keeping my body healthy.

I vow to let go of all worries and anxiety

in order to be light and free.

[bell]

*Leader:*

I am aware that I am deeply connected

to my ancestors, teachers, friends, and all beings.

I vow to be worthy of their trust, to practice wholeheartedly

so that understanding and compassion will flower,

helping living beings be free from their suffering.

May the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha

support my efforts.

[bell, bell]

*[We will now practice the Five Earth-Touchings. We invite everyone to participate at the level of their individual comfort and ability, from full prostrations to a simple nod. For those who are able and wish to do so, please stand.]*

# The Five Earth-Touchings

*Leader:*

1. In gratitude, I bow to all generations of ancestors in my blood family.  
[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

*Reader 1:*

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. Their aspirations, experiences, and wisdom have been transmitted from so many generations of ancestors. I carry in me the life, blood, experience, wisdom, happiness, and sorrow of all generations. The suffering and all the elements that need to be transformed, I am practicing to transform. I open my heart, flesh, and bones to receive the energy of insight, love, and experience transmitted to me by all my ancestors. I see my roots in my father, mother, grandfathers, grandmothers, and all my ancestors. I know I am the continuation of this ancestral lineage. I know wherever children and grandchildren are, ancestors are there, also. I understand that even when parents aspire to love and support their children and grandchildren, they are not always able to do so skillfully because of difficulties they themselves encountered. As a continuation of my ancestors, I bow deeply to them. In whatever ways my ancestors tried to build a way of life based on gratitude, joy, confidence, respect, and loving kindness, I allow their energy to flow through me. I ask my ancestors for their support, protection, and strength.

[bell] [stand up]

*Leader:*

2. In gratitude, I bow to all generations of ancestors in my spiritual family.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

*Reader 2:*

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 through my teachers all teachers over many generations and traditions, going back to the ones who began my spiritual family thousands of years ago. I see that the energy of my spiritual ancestors and that of many generations of teachers has entered me and is creating peace, joy, understanding, and loving kindness in me. I know that the energy of these teachers has deeply transformed the world. Without the Buddha and all these spiritual ancestors, I would not know the way to practice to bring peace and happiness into my life and into the lives of my family and society. 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 over many generations. I am their continuation. I gratefully and joyfully receive their infinite source of energy, peace, stability, understanding, and love. I vow to practice to transform the suffering in myself and the world, and to transmit their energy to future generations of practitioners. I also know that my spiritual ancestors had their own difficulties and may not have always been able to transmit the teachings. I vow to practice to heal any harm or confusion, and fulfill the heart of the teachings.

[bell] [stand up]

*Leader:*

3. In gratitude, I bow to this land and all the ancestors who have cared for and belonged to it.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

*Reader 3:*

I see that I am whole, protected, and nourished by this land and the living beings who have been here and made life possible for me through all their efforts and care, both known and unknown. I also see those who have worked hard to build schools, hospitals, bridges, and roads. I see those who have worked to protect human rights, to develop science and technology, and to fight for freedom and social justice. I also see the historic suffering arising from centuries of injustice and oppression: of the displacement and attempted genocide of Native peoples; of the enslavement and oppression of African peoples; of the exploitation and deportation of immigrants; and of the marginalization of so many communities based on race, ancestry, gender, sexuality, disability, age, class, and other forms of discrimination. I pour all this suffering on the earth and ask the earth to help me transform it into wisdom and compassion. 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 collective consciousness of this society so that future generations will have more safety, joy, and peace. I ask this land for its protection and support.

[bell] [stand up]

*Leader:*

4. In gratitude and compassion, I bow down and transmit my energy to those I love.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

*Reader 4:*

All the energy I have received I now transmit to my parents, my caregivers, everyone I love and have loved, and all who have suffered and worried because of me and for my sake. I aspire to be mindful in my daily life, to see each moment as an opportunity to cultivate wisdom and compassion. I aspire to practice with others in a way that helps create environments that encourage our full development. I transmit my energy to my parents, my caregivers, my siblings, my beloved ones, my family, my friends, my community, and all beings, so that their pain will be relieved, so they can smile and feel the joy of being alive. I want all of them to be healthy and joyful. I know that their happiness and liberation cannot be separated from my happiness and liberation. 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 know that I am not separate from them. I am one with those I love.

[bell] [stand up]

*Leader:*

5. In understanding and compassion, I bow down to reconcile myself with all those who have made me suffer.

[bell] [touch the earth and remain bowing]

*Reader 5:*

I open my heart and send forth my energy of love and understanding to everyone who has caused suffering, including to those who have harmed me and those I love. I know that so many people have themselves undergone a lot of suffering and that their hearts are overloaded with pain, anger, and hatred. I know that, without transformation, anyone who suffers that much will make those around them suffer. I know that so many have been unlucky, never having the chance to be cared for and loved. Life and society have dealt them so many hardships. I know that many have been wronged and abused. I know that many have not been guided in the path of mindful living, accumulating wrong perceptions and harming themselves and others. I pray to honor all our ancestors in our blood and spiritual families to channel to all of us, those who cause suffering and those who suffer, the energy of love and protection, so that our hearts will be able to receive the nectar of love and blossom like a flower. I pray that we all can be transformed to experience the joy of living, so that we come to an end of suffering. I see all this suffering and do not want to hold any greed, hatred, or delusion. I channel my energy of love and understanding to bring about an end of suffering and ask all my ancestors to help.

[bell] [stand up]



# Watering Seeds of Joy

*Leader:*

My parents, my caregivers, they are in me.  
And when I look, I see myself in them.

[bell]

The Buddha, the teachers, they are in me.  
And when I look, I see myself in them.

[bell]

*Reader 1:*

I am a continuation of my parents and my ancestors.  
It is my aspiration to preserve and continue to nourish  
seeds of goodness, skill, and happiness  
which I have inherited.

It is also my desire to recognize the seeds of fear and suffering  
I have inherited, and, bit by bit, to transform them.

[bell]

*Reader 2:*

I am a continuation of the Buddha and my spiritual teachers.  
It is my deep aspiration to preserve, nourish, and develop  
the seeds of understanding, love, and freedom  
which they have transmitted to me.

I resolve to continue  
the career of the Buddha and my Ancestral Teachers,  
and aspire to realize my awakened nature.

[bell]

*Reader 3:*

In my daily life, I also want to sow  
seeds of love and compassion in my own consciousness  
and in the heart of other people.

*Reader 4:*

I am determined not to water  
seeds of craving, aversion, and violence  
in myself and the other.

[bell]

*Reader 5:*

I know that by practicing in this way,  
we can open a way of communication,  
smile and transform some suffering  
and increase our happiness.

[bell]

*Leader:*

Bowing before the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,  
I hold these aspirations in my heart.  
Mind and body together,  
I gratefully dwell deeply in this present moment.

[bell, bell]

## **Sitting Meditation**

[bell]

[After meditating, take a moment to wake up your body.]

## **Recitation of the Five Mindfulness Trainings**

*We typically recite these Trainings during our Day of Mindfulness.*

[Leader: It is now time to recite the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Sangha family, please listen. The Five Mindfulness Trainings are the basis for a happy life. They have the capacity to protect life and to make it beautiful and worth living. They are also the door that opens to enlightenment and liberation. Please listen to each mindfulness training and answer “yes” silently every time you see that you have made an effort to study, practice and observe the mindfulness training being read.]

### **The First Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.

[Venerable: This is the first of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[bell]

## **The Second Mindfulness Training**

Aware of suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing and oppression, I am committed to cultivating loving kindness and learning ways to work for the well-being of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I will practice generosity by sharing my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

[Venerable: This is the second of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[bell]

## **The Third Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.

[Venerable: This is the third of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[bell]

## **The Fourth Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am determined to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy, and hope. I will not spread news that I do not know to be certain and will not criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or the community to break. I am determined to make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

[Venerable: This is the fourth of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[bell]

## **The Fifth Mindfulness Training**

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to ingest foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films, and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society, and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger, and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and the transformation of society.

[Venerable: This is the fifth of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. Have you made an effort to study and practice it during the past month?]

[bell]

[Leader:

Sangha family, we have recited the Five Mindfulness Trainings, the foundation of happiness for the individual, the family and society. We should recite them regularly so that our study and practice of the Mindfulness Trainings can deepen day by day.]

[bell] [Bow]

## Nourishing Happiness

*Leader:*

Sitting here in this moment, protected by the Sangha,  
my happiness is clear and alive.

What a great fortune to have been born a human,  
to encounter the Dharma, to be in harmony with others,  
and to water the Mind of Love  
in this beautiful garden of practice.

[bell]

*Reader 1:*

The energies of the Sangha and mindfulness trainings  
are protecting and helping me not make mistakes  
or be swept along in darkness by unwholesome seeds.

With kind spiritual friends, I am on the path of goodness,  
illuminated by the light of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Although seeds of suffering are still in me  
in the form of afflictions and habit energies,  
mindfulness is also there, helping me touch  
what is most wonderful within and around me.

[bell]

*Reader 2:*

I can still enjoy mindfulness of the six senses:  
my eyes look peacefully upon the clear blue sky,  
my ears listen with wonder to the songs of birds,  
my nose smells the rich scent of sandalwood,  
my tongue tastes food that is a gift of the whole universe,  
my posture is grounded, stable, and relaxed,  
and my mind is one with my body.

[bell]

*Reader 3:*

If there were not a World-Honored One,  
if there were not the wonderful Dharma,  
if there were not a harmonious Sangha,  
I would not be so fortunate  
to enjoy this Dharma happiness today.

[bell]

*Reader 4:*

My resources for practice are my own peace and joy.  
I vow to cultivate and nourish them with daily mindfulness.  
For my ancestors, family, future generations,  
and the whole of humanity,  
I vow to practice well.

[bell]

*Reader 5:*

In my society I know that there are countless people suffering,  
drowned in sensual pleasure, jealousy, and hatred.  
I am determined to take care of my own mental formations,  
to learn the art of deep listening and using loving speech  
in order to encourage communication and  
understanding and to be able to accept and love.

[bell]

*Leader:*

Practicing the actions of a bodhisattva,  
I vow to look with eyes of love  
and a heart of understanding.

[bell]

*Reader 1:*

I vow to listen with a clear mind and ears of compassion,  
bringing peace and joy into the lives of others,  
to lighten and alleviate the suffering of living beings.

[bell]

*Reader 2:*

I am aware that ignorance and wrong perceptions  
can turn this world into a fiery hell.

[bell]

*Reader 3:*

I vow to walk always upon the path of transformation,  
producing understanding and loving kindness.  
I will be able to cultivate a garden of awakening.

[bell]

*Reader 4:*

Although there are birth, sickness, old age, and death,  
now that I have a path of practice,  
I have nothing more to fear.

[bell]

*Reader 5:*

It is a great happiness to be alive in the Sangha with the practice  
of mindfulness trainings and concentration,  
to live every moment in stability and freedom,  
to take part in the work of relieving others' suffering,  
the career of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

[bell]



*Leader:*

In each precious moment, filled with deep gratitude.

I bow before the World-Honored One.

May all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas bear witness

to my wholehearted gratitude,

embracing all beings with arms of great compassion.

[bell, bell]

## **Sharing the Merit**

Opening our hearts wide to the Perfect Highest Awakening,  
we are resolved:

to attain Great Understanding;

to realize compassion and embody deep love;

to practice diligently, transforming our suffering  
and the suffering of all other species.

We vow to share the fruits of this practice

for the happiness of people and all other beings.

We vow to offer tribute to parents, teachers,

friends, and numerous beings

who give guidance and support along the path.

## **Closing Mantra**

Namo A Di Da Phat (15 times)

[bell, bell] [bow]