

Mindfulness Poem **by Maryanne Southam**

Before eating we say the five thoughts, which remind us to have an attitude of respect and gratitude for the food and what it gives us. These five thoughts can be applied to other things, of course, anything we use in the course of the day, and anything that happens to us, in other words, anything we find "on our plate". The five thoughts are:

We must think deeply of the ways and means by which this food has come.
We must consider our merit when accepting it.
We must protect ourselves from error by excluding greed from our minds.
We will eat lest we become lean and die.
We accept this food so that we may become enlightened.

After eating we conclude the meal with the following:

The universe is as the boundless sky
Just as the lotus is not wetted by the water that surrounds it.
Pure and beyond the world is the mind of the trainee
O holy Buddha we take refuge in thee.

Maryanne has found her own way of extending these thoughts into the whole day of practice:

I must think deeply
I must consider my great good fortune
I must protect myself
I will participate
I accept what is offered
I learn to bow.

The universe is as the boundless sky
As a lotus plant, rooted in rich mud flowers
above the transparent, reflective lens of water
bright and calm in the world
is the mind of the practitioner.
Oh compassionate One, I take Refuge in Thee.