

The Sangha River **by Thich Nhat Hanh from Creating True Peace**

If we are a drop of water and we try to get to the ocean as only an individual drop, we will surely evaporate along the way. To arrive at the ocean, you must go as a river. The sangha is your river. In our daily practice, we learn how to be a part of this river. We learn how to look with sangha eyes, how to walk with sangha feet, how to feel with a sangha heart. We have to train ourselves to see the happiness of our community as our own happiness and to see the difficulties of our community as our own difficulties. Once we are able to do this, we will suffer much less. We will feel stronger and more joyful. As members of a sangha, we can develop our individual talent and our individual potential, and at the same time contribute to and participate in the talent and happiness of the entire group. Nothing is lost; everyone wins. A sangha has the power to protect and carry us, especially in difficult times. We have a better chance to develop our potential and protect ourselves when we participate in the work of sangha building.

The Sangha River is a community of friends who practice the way of harmony, awareness, and compassion. In the sangha we practice mindful walking and breathing. The sangha radiates a collective energy that can support us and make us strong. The sangha is a boat that transports us and prevents us from sinking into the ocean of suffering. This is why it is so important that we take refuge in the sangha. Allow your community to hold you, to transport you. When you do, you will feel more solid and stable and will not risk drowning in your suffering. Taking refuge in a sangha is not a matter of belief. “I take refuge in the Sangha” is not a statement of faith; it is a practice. As a river, all the individual drops of water arrive together at the ocean.