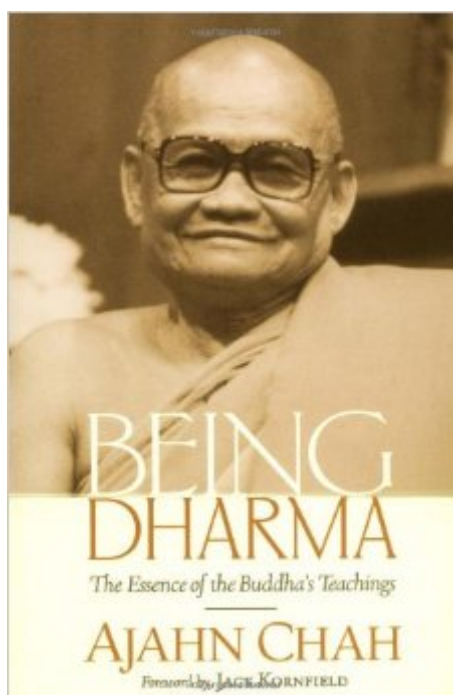


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Being Dharma: The Essence Of The Buddha's Teachings



Synopsis

Chah offers a thorough exploration of Theravadan Buddhism in a gentle, sometimes humorous, style that makes the reader feel as though he or she is being entertained by a story. He emphasizes the path to freedom from emotional and psychological suffering and provides insight into the fact that taking ourselves seriously causes unnecessary hardship. Ajahn Chah influenced a generation of Western teachers: Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg, Sylvia Boorstein, Joseph Goldstein, and many other Western Buddhist teachers were at one time his students. Anyone who has attended a retreat led by one of these teachers, or read one of their books, will be familiar with this master's name and reputation as one of the great Buddhist teachers of this century.

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Customer Reviews

The Dharma teachings in this book are taken from recordings of the Thai Forest Monk Ajahn Chah. As such they are folksy and often humorous. But, they represent one of the clearest representations of the Theravada path of Buddhism you are likely to find. The Theravada path is, at least until recently in the West, the lesser known of the two major divisions of Buddhism. In recent years the interest in this path, which places emphasis on the Monastic life and strict meditation, has grown. But, for the most part, those interested have not had the wealth of printed material that is available on Zen or Tibetan paths. Ajahn Chah often uses examples from Zen and other Buddhist paths. While at one time the Theravada path was most common path, it has, over the centuries, had less influence in the West. This book, along with the works of Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein, gives

us a powerful view into that approach to Buddhism and its relevance to the development of spirituality in the West.

Ajahn Chah devoted some 25 years to the teaching of Buddhism to Thai monastics up until the time of his death in 1992, as well as various laypersons. He always had an uncanny ability to explain the Dharma in a way that made your belly move with laughter, while at the same time helping to open your mind, too. His ambition was to always present the Dharma in a way that even the most uneducated could derive something from, and he succeeded 10-fold. Paul Breiter has done an excellent job here translating this beloved teacher's most profound dharma talks encompassing a wide range of Buddhist topics: ethical conduct, impermanence, right view and right action, among others. Ajahn Chah instructs us all to steer completely clear from recklessness in our lives, be that with our awareness of life itself or in regards to other people. He gives us the practice and plan of what the very title of this book suggests, "being dharma." Likewise, as texts like *The Tao Te Ching* have asserted throughout the ages (in addition to countless keen-eyed teachers), Chah speaks of the problems relating to the sense of ownership; how since we don't really own anything, one should not get caught up in sentiments of greed which always follows from a clinging to possessions. This book addresses all of us in the modern era, in a world so caught up in a seeming epidemic of self-serving, heedless, and all-around oftentimes very foolish lifestyle. It doesn't matter which sect of Buddhism you might practice (if any) to take something beneficial from this current text, for it was written for us all. Enjoy.

Written by the much-loved Thai Buddhist master Ajahn Chah (1919-1992), *Being Dharma: The Essence Of The Buddha's Teachings* is a clear, informative, straightforward, open-handed approach to the wisdom of the Buddha. From the Path, to Peace, and life beyond Cause and Effect, chapters cover numerous core aspects of Buddhism in language that lay readers can easily follow. *Being Dharma* is an enthusiastically recommended introduction to Buddhist studies and a welcome contribution to the growing library of Buddhist literature available to western readers.

Paul Breiter's wonderful and timely translation of the teachings of the late Thai Dharma master Ajahn Cha provides western dharma students access to a straight path toward the gate of Dzogchenpo. Are we westerners culturally pre-disposed to dispense with preliminaries in hopes of vanquishing suffering through rapid apprehension of the ultimate? Living Dzogchen masters have begun reminding students that Samatha concentration is the door to the spaciousness of

Vipassana, and that Vipassana is the entryway to unexcelled Dzogchen/ Mahamudra view. Ajahn Cha communicates this in the simplest terms. He provides guidance for students seeking to progress toward the jettison of conceptualization and grasping. Terms such as "accumulation of merit," sometimes difficult for western students to fully comprehend, are de-mystified. Ajahn Cha's instructions enable readers to disentangle from complexity and superstitious beliefs, and to practice Dharma purely, easily and confidently. Great teachers remind us that the Dharma Essence is so simple, it is difficult to apprehend. Luang Paw (Venerable Father) Cha provides down-to-earth advice for how to accomplish the results of merit and wisdom through everyday life/practice. Here in Laos, it seems fair to suggest that Laotian people remain among the "simplest", kindest and most down-to-earth. Suffused with his own Laotian heritage, Ajahn Cha provides lucid, compassionate and accessible explanations of the mystical Path of Dharma. Western Dharma students are fortunate to have access to many of the great Dharma texts and treatises. "Being Dharma" is among the best now available. Its instructions for how to "live Dharma", ease the mind, and help attenuate further elaboration of confusion in our troubled world. To the translator, could you provide us please with more of Ajahn Cha's Dharma Nectar?

Ajahn Chah is my favorite monk and in this book, are his most profound wisdoms. Hands down, this is something I could live by and read again and again. Every page is deep and insightful and written in a language we can all understand. You don't have to be of a certain class or of a certain education to be able to grab these concepts. Ajahn Chah's words ring with truth that will keep you turning the pages. It will change the way you see yourself, the world and life. It really will change your life.

This book covers many different topics. Ajahn Chah addresses many common difficulties and straightens some common wrong views. The style this book is written in is easy to understand, although there is deep meaning in the words. Ajahn Chah speaks from his heart, from what he knows to be true himself as apposed to something that he just believes. I think anyone could learn from this book.

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