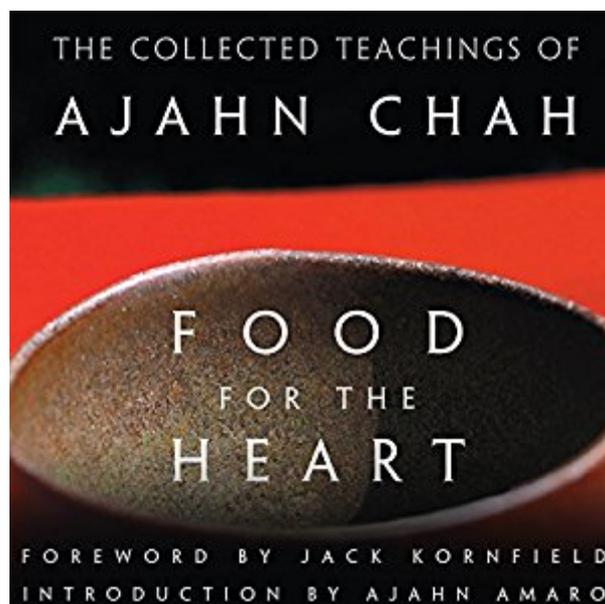


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Food For The Heart: The Collected Teachings Of Ajahn Chah



Synopsis

Renowned for the beauty and simplicity of his teachings, Ajahn Chah was Thailand's best-known meditation teacher. His charisma and wisdom influenced many American and European seekers, and helped shape the American Vipassana community. This collection brings together for the first time Ajahn Chah's most powerful teachings, including those on meditation, liberation from suffering, calming the mind, enlightenment and the "living dhamma". Most of these talks have previously only been available in limited, private editions and the publication of Food for the Heart, therefore, represents a momentous occasion: the hugely increased accessibility of his words and wisdom. Western teachers such as Ram Dass and Jack Kornfield have extolled Chah's teachings for years, and now listeners can experience them directly in this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This collection of talks from Ajahn Chah is well done. His first book, "A Still Forest Pool" was a breath of fresh air. The 'chapters' are short, some just a few sentences long, and were filled with deep teachings. 'Food for the Heart' offers long chapters and the incredibility that was Ajahn Chah seems to jump off the pages. These talks have been translated from Thai and whoever did the translation did such a great job that often I feel as though I am 'hearing' the teaching instead of reading it. "If you want to know the Dhamma, where do you look? You must look within the body and the mind. You won't find it on a bookshelf. To really see the Dhamma you have to look within your own body and mind - there are only these two things. The mind is not visible to the physical eye, it

must be seen with the "mind's eye." The Dhamma that is in the body must be seen in the body. And with what do we look at the body? We look at the body with the mind. You won't find the Dhamma by looking anywhere else, because both happiness and suffering arise right here. Or maybe you've seen happiness arising in the trees? Or from the rivers, or the weather? Happiness and suffering are feelings that arise in our own bodies and mind." From Food for the Heart - page 336 So direct! This is Ajahn Chah really teaching and encouraging us to practice the Dhamma. His style of teaching truly encourages me to get on the cushion, and also to practice when I'm not on the cushion. There is no 'down time.' If you are new to Buddhism you might really enjoy his first offering, 'A Still Forest Pool' but if you have some background and are seeking a teacher who can inspire and really point the way to the Buddha's teachings, this is a wonderful book. I hope you enjoy it!

I read a lot of Buddhist books, and they all have value in one way or another. But never have I read a book that had ALL of the value of the other books between just one set of covers. This is that book. Ajahn Chah of course was (and through his students still is) a marvelous teacher, with the gifts of humor and directness. Even in translation, you get a full feeling of what it must have been like to listen to this man talk. (Although, as Brahmavamso says, we laypeople get the jewels of sometimes all-night talks. Sorry, Ajahn Brahm!) This book is like having Luang Por speak directly to you, with kindness and toughness at the same time. I "sipped" a chapter of this book a week, never wanting it to end. I have been reading it for six months now and finally finished it, and I will probably start over from the beginning and do it again. It is not overstating the point to say that this book is a gift to humanity. Also, and this is less important but still nice, Food for the Heart is a truly handsome book. It's technically paperback, but with jacket tabs and a strong cover. The paper is thick and creamy--sorry if I'm enjoying my senses too much! :) And the typography is very pleasing. It's just a wonderful, wonderful book.

According to the introductory material in this book, it was published so that Achaan Chah's teachings would reach a wider audience. Certainly, this is a worthy goal if successful. Achaan Chah never charged anyone anything for his teachings ... after all the dhamma is priceless. He also worked to preserve the forest around his monastery in Thailand--one of the last forested regions in Thailand. Everything in this book is available on-line for free too. It's at accesstoinight.org under "thai forest tradition", and at abayaghiri.org under the heading "publications." However, I recognize that there are still valid reasons for owning a book these days, and if you are part of the wider audience which otherwise would not read these teachings, I heartily recommend this book.

Ajahn Chah took it upon himself as a life's mission to make the Buddha Dharma accessible to absolutely anyone, be that a Harvard professor or an uneducated rice farmer (a life he was very familiar with). For about 25 years, until his death in 1992, he taught and trained nuns and monks on the way of monastic life while delivering countless wonderful teachings to laypersons around the globe. He taught Theravada meditation and applied the teachings thoroughly into his own life; he truly was practicing what he preached. Over a half million people attended his death in Thailand, an amount which says wonders about what kind of an impact he had on that region during his lifetime. Chah always took great comfort from the Buddha's teachings on facing our suffering, simply to pass right through it with diligent practice. This monumental work successfully gives us all access to the core of Ajahn's teachings which he gave throughout his career in one convenient place which we can go back to again and again. It has 3 sections: Conduct, Virtue, and The World of Senses (which delves into meditation & wisdom). This text gives virtually endless teachings on how to practice meditation, ethical living, and cultivation of wisdom. And to sum the book up, practice Chah believes to be the absolute core of the Buddha's teachings. While your sure to take away a breadth of helpful knowledge on how and what it means to practice, you'll equally enjoy his simplicity and humor, as well. Enjoy the book!

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