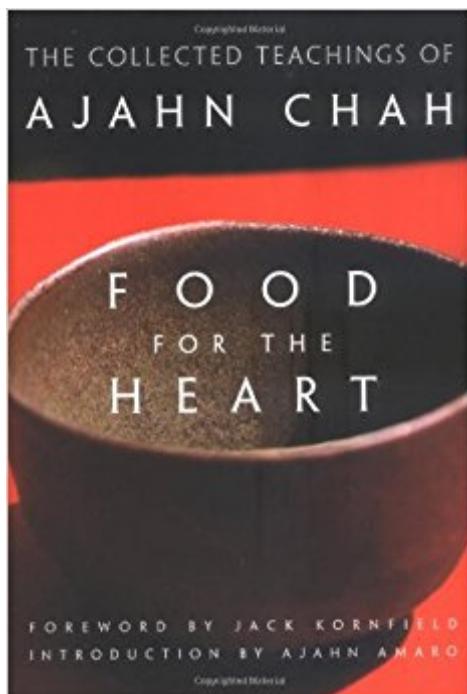


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# Food For The Heart: The Collected Teachings Of Ajahn Chah



## 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 readers can experience them directly in this book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Buddhism practiced and preached at the monastery at Wat Pah Pong in northeast Thailand has grown in popularity in part because of its gifted leader and speaker, the late Ajahn Chah. This compilation of talks given by Ajahn (acharya or teacher in Sanskrit) Chah extols the virtues of practice over pedantry, and makes judicious use of the technical vocabulary of Buddhism, which can be daunting to casual readers. But even without the full glossary of terms and explanatory notes, Ajahn Chah's humorous, analogy-laden narration of his tradition's Buddhist practice a practice that is basic and almost reductionistic, similar to modern Zen makes these teachings accessible to beginners and appealing to serious practitioners. More troubling is the lack of context

for Ajahn Chah's talks: no dates or details are given. For instance, readers who encounter the injunction to renounce familial ties alongside a consideration of how spousal sexual relations may conform to the Four Noble Truths may be perplexed if they do not know that Ajahn Chah tailored his talks to the needs of both monastics and lay practitioners on quite separate occasions and in varying contexts. Also, there is very little introductory material about what distinguishes the Thai Forest tradition, other than a definition of tudong (forest pilgrimage and meditation) and the fact that it belongs to Theravada, the minority of the two great doctrinal divisions within Buddhism. However, this is a valuable collection of the Thai Buddhist master's thoughts. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Ajahn Chah was a prominent teacher in the Thai forest-dwelling tradition. Beginning in the mid-sixties, many Western students, including Jack Kornfield, studied with him at Wat Pa Pong. This anthology arrives on the tenth anniversary of Ajahn Chah's death. The talks in it cover a wide range of dharma topics, and have been skillfully translated and edited to preserve the vibrancy, directness and humor that he was known for. Though Ajahn Chah taught for over thirty years, his talks, unfortunately, were not systematically recorded and transcribed, which makes this collection from Wisdom all the more precious." (Shambhala Sun)"Like an expertly prepared and artistically presented feast, this compilation of Ajahn Chah's talks offers a tasty treat for just about anyone traveling the path to freedom. We see a master at work: Ajahn Chah offers teachings in his signature no-nonsense style, using simple language, humor, and delightful similes. One feels lifted up by the strength of his character, his unfailing confidence in dhamma, and by his earnest encouragement. This is one of those books that can be opened to any page to find a wise teaching. And at its end, one comes away with the feeling of having enjoyed a great meal." (Inquiring Mind)"Ajahn Chah spoke no English, yet his deep clear teachings motivated thousands of Westerners to embrace the simple profundity of living Buddhism. In this book, you'll find Ajahn Chah's unique wisdom, which shone brilliantly from the stillness of his mind. These words will inspire, guide, and liberate you. It is Buddhism at its best." (Ajahn Brahm, author of Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung?)"The Buddhism practiced in northern Thailand has grown in popularity in part because of its gifted leader and speaker, the late Ajahn Chah. This compilation of his talks extols the virtues of practice and makes judicious use of the technical vocabulary of Buddhism. Ajahn Chah's humorous, analogy-laden narration of his tradition's practice--a practice that is basic and almost reductionistic, similar to modern Zen--makes these teachings accessible to beginners and appealing to serious practitioners. A valuable collection of the Thai Buddhist master's thoughts."

(Publishers Weekly)"Ajahn Chah's wisdom, charisma, and simple teachings have had a profound effect upon the development of the Vipassana community in the West. Published on the tenth anniversary of his death, this collection brings together for the first time the dharma talks of Thailand's best-known meditation teacher and forest monastic, talks previously available only in rare or limited editions. It presents Ajahn Chah's teachings on meditation, liberation from suffering, calming the mind, enlightenment, and the 'living dharma'." (Tricycle)"Includes nearly forty teachings divided into three categories: conduct, meditation, and wisdom. Ajahn Chah presents these teachings in his beautifully simple and heartfelt style." (Buddhadharma)"Ajahn Chah's teachings are simple, clear and profoundly helpful. This book is a great contribution to the Dharma in the West." (Joseph Goldstein, author of *A Heart Full of Peace and One Dharma*)"Ajahn Chah's words have the sharp sting, salty tang and sand-dry wit of the old Zen masters. They will provide illumination and inspiration for all students of Buddhism." (Jan Chozen Bays Roshi, founding teacher at Great Vow Zen Monastery, and author of *Jizo Bodhisattva*)"This rich collection is a real treasure. Profound, direct, earthy, and often funny, *Food for the Heart* will be especially precious for practitioners of vipassana meditation in all Buddhist lineages." (Larry Rosenberg, author of *Breath by Breath*)"Ajahn Chah stands out as a profound teacher in the best of Buddhist wisdom traditions. Compassionate, lucid, and far beyond any sectarian categorizing, *Food for the Heart* is all that and more. This humble and down-to-earth forest monastic has given us all a work which will stand the test of time with the world's great classics of spiritual literature. An important volume for all serious followers of the Way." (John Daishin Buksbazen, author of *Zen Meditation in Plain English*)

I prefer "A Still Forest Pool" to this book; it is brief and concise, and a good way to get a flavor of Ajahn Chah's teachings, for those who just want an introduction. As "Food for the Heart" was written from recorded talks, I found a great deal of repetition of ideas and concepts in this volume, which are stated much more succinctly in "A Still Forest Pool".

This book is a wonderful collection of teachings from Ajahn Chah. The style is very straight forward-no beating around the bush. Some lessons are aimed towards the monks/nuns (as the lesson maybe talks for them) but you are able to learn from them as well. I recommend the book for beginners to advanced alike. The language is easy to understand, without a lot of confusing "Buddhist Terms" there are some but it has a glossary if you need it (which is great if you have to refer back to it in another chapter). This book is easy to break up-meaning you don't need to read it all at once. I actually took about 6 months to read through it-took my good old time :) -I would read

some then let the lessons sink in etc.. while I worked on lessons online for the Dhammapada. Then I would come back to it. No problem at all, as each chapter is different-not like a story-but lessons/teachings per chapter. The stories are wide in variety & I think most Buddhist students can take something away from reading this book. I highly recommend it. I also recommend books by Ajahn Brahm.

Like all these books there will be some ideas that you don't agree with or that contradict other ideas expressed in the same book, but it's one of the strongest books I've read in terms of clarity, practicality and simplicity of explanation. Interestingly (sort of), I was simultaneously reading this and Jack Kornfield's "After the Ecstasy the Laundry". Ajahn Chah was Kornfield's teacher, and Kornfield would occasionally make comments about Chah, like seeing Chah towards the end of his life when he was very sick and a short bit about that encounter. Anyway, "Food For The Heart" is a really good book. I think reading just the free Kindle sample will give you a good sense of whether it's the type of book that would appeal to you.

Shared this treasure with my family and friends who are ready to open their hearts to the Dhamma. So blessed that this collection exists. The voice version is excellent.

I am a follower of the Buddhist philosophy and read many books and attend many classes, retreats, etc. I was first introduced to Ajahn Chah when I ordered some books from Singapore and they sent me as a gift a compilation of Chah's teachings. He is so clear, so kindly blunt, so wise. There are times he makes me laugh as what he says can cut through all the psycho babble and the shields we put up to protect ourselves and gets to the heart of the matter. I'm so glad to have this book in my Buddhist library. carries an amazing inventory in writings on Buddhism. You can't go wrong with this book. The advice, the lessons, the teachings are wonderful. Now if I can just integrate it all.

I've learned a lot from this book. Answered many questions I had with my practice.

If the messages in this text were headline news everyday, the world would be a much better place. If you have been tested to the point where change is imminent, and you need to hold onto something, Chah will teach you how to embrace yourself, filter out the static, step out of the way of insult and anger, and enjoy that which each breath brings. Ultimately, "Love is the answer" and this read will take you there. Peace.

This is the collected works for one of the best mind in BuddhismHe taught quite a few of the American Buddhism Root teachers that are well knownNice book to pick up and find something to easy the path when the ego becomes a bit negitive

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