A serene beach scene with a small wooden boat on the water and driftwood on the sand. The text "MAY WE LEAVE THIS LEGACY WITH YOU" is overlaid in a serif font at the top. The author's name "Buddhadasa Bhikkhu" is at the bottom.

MAY WE LEAVE THIS
LEGACY WITH YOU

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Photos :

Legacies no. 6, 8, 9, 11, 21, 22, 28, 33, 37, 41 from the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives

Legacies no. 1-5, 7, 10, 12-20, 23-27, 29-32, 34-36, 38-40 by Pornthip Sanguanmoo

MAY WE LEAVE THIS LEGACY WITH YOU

Section I

Legacy in the context of material and ceremonial matters

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Translated from the Thai into English by Santikaro

The ‘Legacies’ were first published in Thai in the book commemorating Ajahn Buddhadasa’s 80th birthday anniversary in 1986.

The new revised English translation by Santikaro first appeared together with associated photographs as a series of posts on the English Facebook page of the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives (‘Suan Mokkh Bangkok’) during May–October 2015.

This electronic edition is the fruit of the collaboration of a network of volunteers.

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MAY WE LEAVE THIS LEGACY WITH YOU

SECTION I

Legacy in the context of material and ceremonial matters

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Anumodanā

To all Dhamma Comrades, those helping to spread Dhamma:

Break out the funds to spread Dhamma to let Faithful Trust flow,
Broadcast majestic Dhamma to radiate long-living joy.

Release unexcelled Dhamma to tap the spring of Virtue,
Let safely peaceful delight flow like a cool mountain stream.

Dhamma leaves of many years sprouting anew, reaching out,
To unfold and bloom in the Dhamma Centers of all towns.

To spread lustrous Dhamma and in hearts glorified plant it,
Before long, weeds of sorrow, pain, and affliction will flee.

As Virtue revives and resounds throughout Thai society,
All hearts feel certain love toward those born, aging, and dying.

Congratulations and Blessings to all Dhamma Comrades,
You who share Dhamma to widen the people's prosperous joy.

Heartiest appreciation from Buddhadāsa Indapañño,
Buddhist Science ever shines beams of Bodhi long-lasting.

In grateful service, fruits of merit and wholesome successes,
Are all devoted in honor to Lord Father Buddha.

Thus may the Thai people be renowned for their Virtue,
May perfect success through Buddhist Science awaken their hearts.

May the King and His Family live long in triumphant strength,
May joy long endure throughout this our word upon earth.

from

Buddhadāsa Indapañño

Mokkhabalārāma
Chaiya, 2 November 2530

Foreword

I have no inheritance to leave behind for Buddhist friends, my comrades in birth, aging, illness, and death, except for what is spelled out in the following statements. My hope is that for however long these legacies are passed along the activity of Suan Mokkhabalārāma will continue and ‘Buddhadāsa’ will remain in that place for that long.

Please receive these legacies in your contemplation from this very moment which will create ease in passing them further along.

May you accept them as a Dhamma inheritance for all Dhamma Comrades who have offered body and life in service to the Buddha’s Dispensation for the benefit of human beings throughout the world without the least personal consideration.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Translator's Note

For his 80th 'Age Teasing Day' (birthday), Tan Ajahn prepared a souvenir book of Dhamma photos, proverbs, sayings, riddles, and legacies for his students.

One of the six sections was about the legacies he wished to leave behind. They comprise a concise summary of the main points of his teaching, beginning with certain practical matters (Section I) and ending with more abstract or spiritual legacies (Section II).

Santikaro

SECTION I

Legacy in the context of material
and ceremonial matters



Legacy 1

Everyone can be a *buddhadāsa* (servant of the Buddha), if one wants to with a pure heart; just serve in the propagation of Buddhism by setting an example in practice and happy living that others may see and follow.



Legacy 2

Three Vows suitable for all servants of the Buddha to take as their standard in performing their duty for the world's benefit:

1. Strive to realize the heart of one's own religion;
2. Strive to help each other pull ourselves out from under the power of materialism;
3. Strive to create mutual understanding among all religions.



Legacy 3

The first vow – helping everyone to realize the heart of Buddhism – is to bring about practice that is good, direct, just, and fit for liberation, in order to directly and genuinely fulfill the Buddha's purpose.



Legacy 4

The second vow – freeing the world from the power of materialism, from the flavors that arise from sensuous matter – should be a cooperative endeavor of all people and all religions in the world, so that the world will be cleansed, cleared, and calmed of its current state.



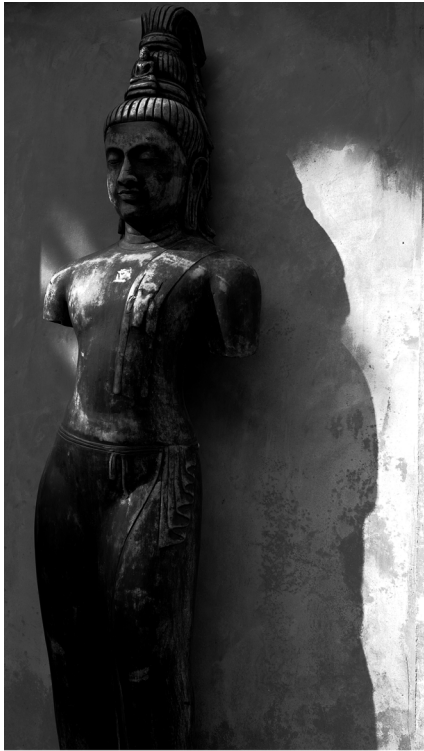
Legacy 5

The third vow – creating mutual understanding among religions – is necessary because the world must have many religions, as many as the types of people in the world, in order for all to be able to live together in peace. Every religion teaches unselfishness, the differences are merely in methodologies.



Legacy 6

Gardens of Liberation (*Suan Mokkhs*) – places that make intimacy with nature mentally and physically convenient – should be set up everywhere for the direct study of nature, for understanding the law of nature, and for sampling the taste of nature, until everyone knows how to love nature, which will help us to understand Dhamma easily.



Legacy 7

The Suan Mokkh of the Theater of Spiritual Entertainments is necessary for these beings which instinctually need entertainment, which is a spiritual support, a fifth support in addition to the four physical supports. Please help to manage them for the use and above-mentioned benefit of everyone.



Legacy 8

Suan Mokkh International, especially for the spiritual light of our fellow human beings from other countries and languages, is an idea that arose when we saw them struggling and searching in order to find themselves. Please help to establish it, then maintain and continue it.



Legacy 9

Spiritual Theaters for spiritual entertainment with the flavor of Dhamma are needed in place of the sensual theaters which always turn human beings into some sort of demon. Humans need entertainment as the fifth requisite of life, but it must be arranged carefully.



Legacy 10

The five pillars on our roofs are symbolic of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), the five groups of clinging (*upādānakkhandha*), the five powers (*bala*), the five sovereigns (*indriya*), the five essentials (*dhammasāra*), the five paths & fruits & nibbāna (*magga-phala-nibbāna*). Even the five fingers on your own hand are just reminders of the matter of eliminating *dukkha* for us all.



Legacy 11

The slogan of Suan Mokkh is ‘eat from a cat’s plate, bathe in a stream, sleep in a pen, and listen to the mosquitoes sing.’ This is a practical standard for eliminating the problems of material life and supports mental development because it follows that natural principle which says, ‘simple living, high thinking.’



Legacy 12

The Diploma from Suan Mokkh is ‘die before dying.’ In other words, mind has finished with feelings of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ before the physical body dies, leaving pure *sati-paññā* regarding life. This is something that can happen even now. Thus, the sooner one ‘dies,’ the more profitable life is.



Legacy 13

We use the principle of people language & Dhamma language to distinguish between material and spiritual matters so that we will speak about them correctly, because we will understand them correctly, deeply, and advantageously. Don't mix them up, or reverse them, that will just lead to dizziness.



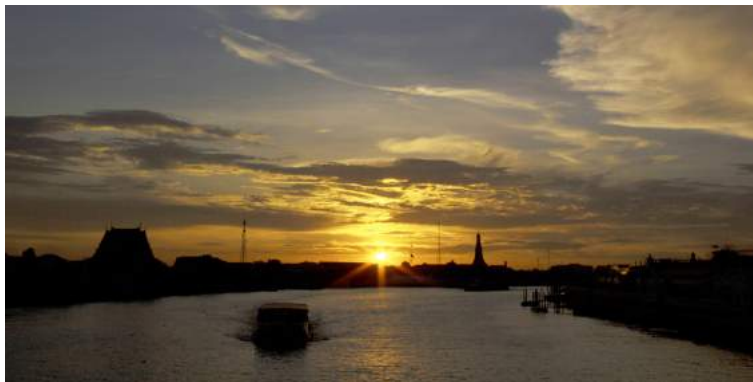
Legacy 14

The system of using people language & Dhamma language is most certainly needed in the study and teaching of Buddhism, because the Lord Buddha taught the Dhamma both in the Dhamma language of ordinary people and in the Dhamma Language of those who have seen the Dhamma for themselves. Thus, we must observe this distinction carefully in our study, teaching, and conversation; otherwise, dizziness will ensue.



Legacy 15

‘Age Teasing’ and giving the Age Teasing gift, as we do at Suan Mokkh, results in a heedfulness and self-knowledge that improves each year. May I leave this to be maintained and continued for the sake of everyone’s spiritual development.



Legacy 16

True Buddhists shouldn't be bothered even by headaches, let alone nervous disorders and mental illness. This is possible through reliance upon the Dhamma principle at the heart of Buddhism that says '*tathatā*' or 'just like that.' This is the natural fact that all things must happen according to their causes and conditions, and must be dealt with right there, without there being anything strange or surprising about it. Thus, may we leave it behind as a legacy.



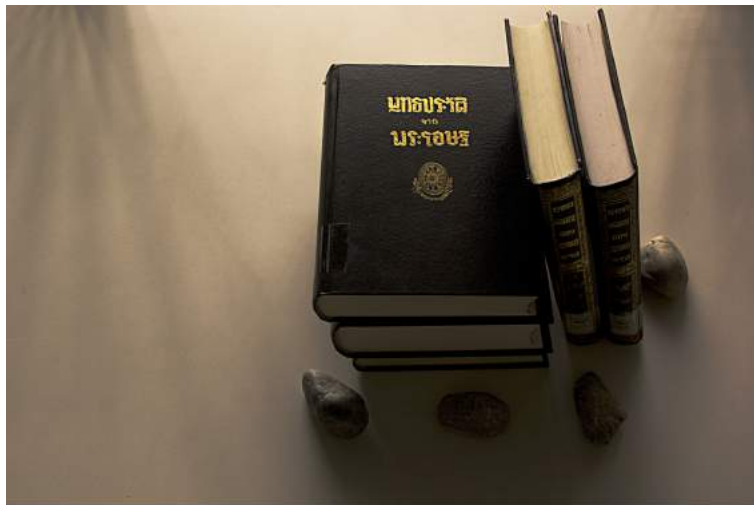
Legacy 17

The Three Cs of Cleanness, Clarity, & Calmness are qualities of the Noble Ones and are in the position of being the essence of Buddhism's Triple Gem. May we leave them as a legacy for everyone to use as a daily mantra.



Legacy 18

The Buddhist Charter that we develop together remains correct and in line with the principles of Buddhism. Buddhists may take it as a standard for right practice, for good results, and for convenience in being ones who know, are awakened, & have blossomed, and who will never again fall into the swamps of superstition and materialism. May we leave it as a long lasting legacy.



Legacy 19

The Literary Works making up *The Dhamma Proclamation* Series, the *From His Own Lips* Series, the *Floating Lotus* Series, and the *Turning of the Dhamma Wheel* Series: may we leave them as a memorial of a poetic mind that has released them with the greatest care into the Dhamma Sea – that is the hearts of all True People throughout the land – for them to thrive in the reservoir of that Dhamma Sea for unending time.



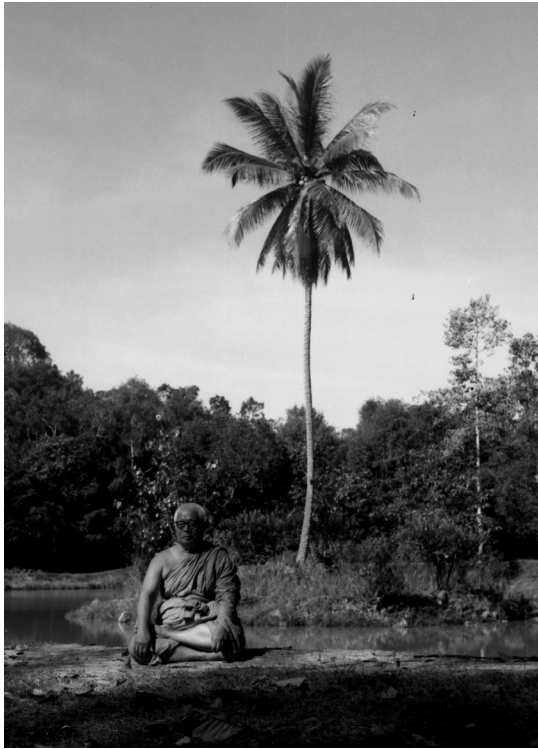
Legacy 20

The Suan Mokkh style of chanting uses chants that we have translated into our own language, trying to make them graceful and melodious. The passages chosen are concise and powerful, suitable for use as the objects of *samādhi* and *vipassanā*, also. May we leave these to be chanted for a long, long time.



Legacy 21

The Demonstration Alms Offering practiced in Suan Mokkh is a practical study in how to feed one-hundred monks, in how to do it smoothly while keeping the defilements under control. Please maintain this kind of ceremony in order to support and preserve Buddhism in an economical way, free of difficulties, and maintaining the ancient form of the Buddha's time.



Legacy 22

The Nalike coconut pond is a lesson modeled after a children's lullaby of the southern people that shows how much they had realized the highest Dhamma in times past, to the extent that they could take Nibbāna as the theme of a children's lullaby. Please protect the honor of our ancestors on this point and make ourselves fit to be their descendants, everyone of us.



Legacy 23

Preaching Dhamma in lecture form, which sometimes must be done while standing, does not go against the Dhamma-Vinaya in any way. Convenient and appropriate for the times, it causes the propagation of Buddhism to proceed smoothly and successfully. It is not necessary to stick to the strict literal interpretation of Vinaya when they are customs and manners of a different era and time.



Legacy 24

The standard followed at Suan Mokkh of not welcoming people who can't wash their own plates, who must have someone else clean up after they eat, is a standard which doesn't conflict with Buddhist principles. We use it to select which people are fit to stay in the monastery for the sake of practicing Dhamma because their hearts are in harmony with the principles of unselfishness and not taking advantage of others. Please help to maintain this as a continuing legacy.



Legacy 25

Sleeping with a wooden pillow is something the Buddha himself recommended as a way to train ourselves in not oversleeping. Māra has no chance to take over the person who doesn't indulge in sleep, who is strong and active both physically and mentally. In those days, both wanderers and warriors slept with wooden pillows, especially, the Licchavi noblemen.



Legacy 26

Please allow me to object to the words ‘work is money, money is work.’ They are out of line with Buddhism, which teaches us to work as a duty that is proper for all forms of life, rather than to work seeking money to fatten up life so that it delights in the roads to ruin (*apāyamukha*) or in the pleasures that are nothing but ‘flashes of insanity.’ I leave this legacy of protest with you, also.



Legacy 27

The secret trick of Zen is merely the original way of Buddhism that adds tranquility (*samatha*) to insight (*vipassanā*) so that they work together in the instant that there is both concentration (*samādhi*) and a penetrating investigation that seeks the mind's original state – freedom from defilement. Zen doesn't separate them in order to practice just the particular one we are attached to. The relevant Sutta teaching is “Contemplation (*jhāyati*) doesn't occur for one lacking wisdom; wisdom doesn't occur for one lacking contemplation (*jhāyati*).”



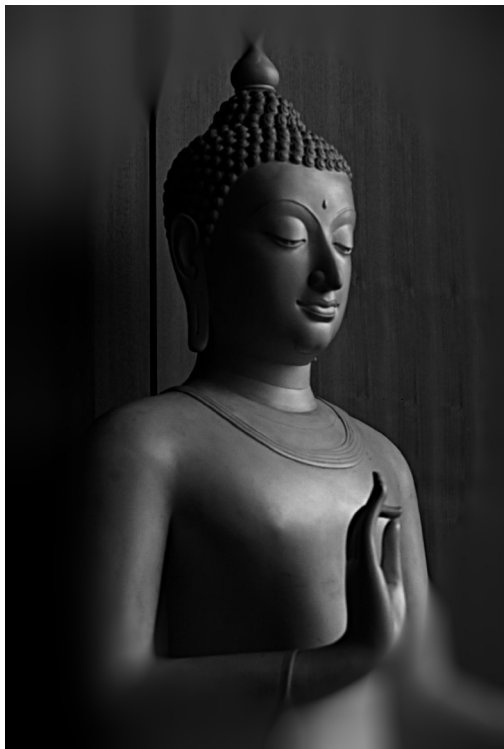
Legacy 28

The principle of vaccination – using bacteria to cure disease – can be applied in Buddhist Dhamma practice by applying greed’s power to coveting goodness and merits, by applying anger’s power to hating defilements and *dukkha* as enemies in order to destroy them, and by applying delusion’s power to infatuation with doing basic kinds of good rather than falling into evil. This is possible because these three ‘powers’ are already fully present in our minds as our opening stakes in the ‘gamble’ of life.



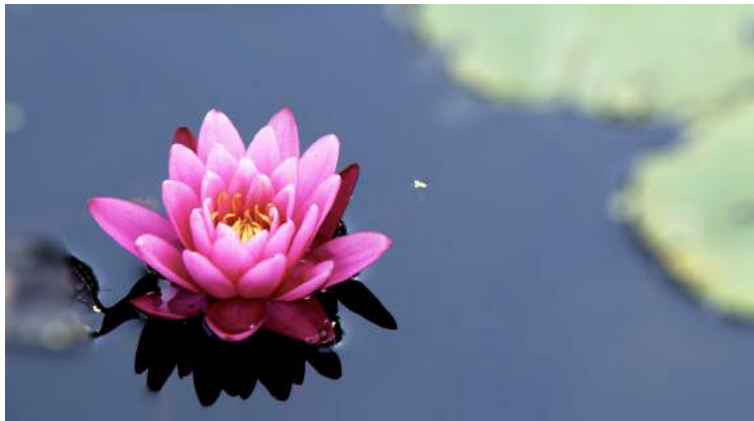
Legacy 29

Having Dhamma all night and all day is not so hard to do. When about to do any of the duties of daily life, become aware of the fact that ‘Duty itself is Dhamma.’ Because duty is able to eliminate every type of problem and brings only good, desirable results, its meaning is exactly that of the word ‘Dhamma,’ that which helps the practitioner avoid falling into *dukkha*. So when duties are done all day long, there is Dhamma all day long. Even resting is a duty that must be performed as much as any other, that is, in order to have the necessary strength for doing one’s Duty.



Legacy 30

The Great Standards of the Discipline (Vinaya Mahāpadesa) in the style of the Vinaya (Discipline) must be passed on and taken as necessary in these modern times that are materially developed to the point of filling the world with problems of morality and discipline, both for wanderers and householders. Please study this Mahāpadesa thoroughly in order to prevent foolish innocence.



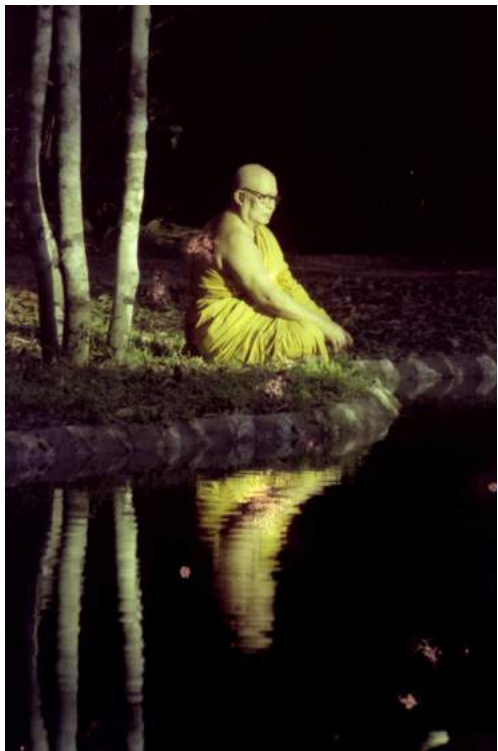
Legacy 31

The Mahāpadesa (Great Standards) concerning Dhamma from the Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta must be used together with the principles for judging Dhamma-Vinaya from the Gotami Sutta in order to discern what is right with the most accuracy and completeness. Such clarification is badly needed by modern Buddhists, whose lives are full of troubles that increase day by day. This approach has already been used with excellent results, so we ask to leave it as a legacy to be applied further.



Legacy 32

The ‘Humming version of Dependent Origination’ is taught in a way much easier to understand and practice than the usual formula. You ought to understand this form first, before investigating the standard formula. In either case, the practice is the same: be mindful at *phassa* (contact). You can find the details in *Dependent Origination From His Own Lips*.



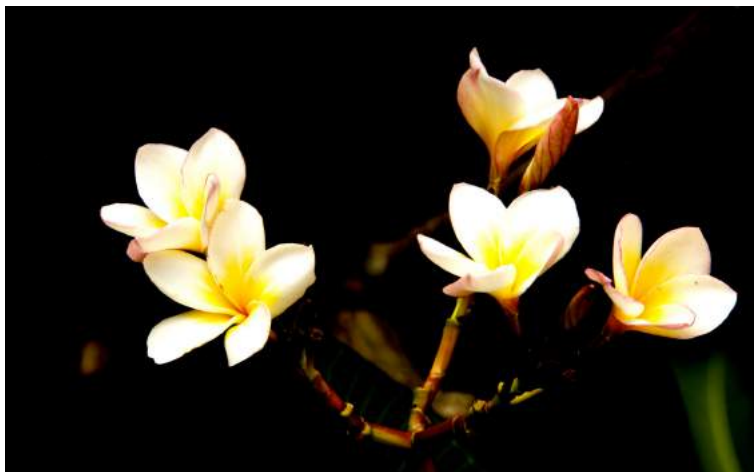
Legacy 33

Using the principles of *idappaccayatā*, *paṭicca-samuppāda*, *tathatā*, & *suññatā* as ambrosia that put us beyond death, or above the cycles of death and birth, because they finish off ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ is the genuine daily activity of Buddhists, is the most direct path, and has the best results, so I leave it with you as something I’ve used to good result already.



Legacy 34

The Vimuttāyatana Sutta is a Dhamma principle worthy of special interest. It tells us that we are able to realize Dhamma on five occasions; when listening to Dhamma, when explaining the Dhamma for others to hear, when reciting Dhamma, when contemplating Dhamma, and when investigating and analyzing Dhamma. Obviously, there are many opportunities to realize Dhamma, but we have been so careless as to not take advantage of even a single one.



Legacy 35

Using the 10 points of the Kālāma Sutta thoroughly and correctly is a sure principle and method for maintaining and protecting Buddhism in ways that it is truly a refuge and carries on the teaching as the Buddha wished. I've used this method continuously and successfully in line with its fullest meaning, and leave this 'tradition' with you as part of our legacy.



Legacy 36

It is better to study the four foundations of mindfulness from the Ānāpānasati Sutta than from the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, which is overly long, has a vague and muddled appearance, and lacks a clear sequence or progression. Just to read it takes hours. On the other hand, the Ānāpānasati Sutta is a continuous progression of 16 steps that encompass everything from the beginning of practice up to and including the final realization of the fruits of practice. The Buddha himself declared that he relied upon this practice in his own Awakening. Please consider this well. May we leave this fact as a legacy, also.



Legacy 37

Voidness (*suññatā*) for householders, including women and children, is to be mindful and clearly aware in not feeling attachment towards anything such that love, anger, hatred, fear, worry, longing, envy, and jealousy occur through the power of feeling 'I' and 'mine.' We insist that everyone has the awareness and strength needed to practice this and ought to practice it, so I leave it as a special legacy for householder.



Legacy 38

The principle of following the footsteps of the *arahants* can be used both by householders and homeless monastics. This is the principle of living life in a way that constantly scrapes away the *kilesa* (defilements) and lessens the familiarity with and tendency (*anusaya*) that causes more *kilesa*, by having *sati-sampajañña* in the moment that sense objects impact, and so not letting anything concoct greed, hatred, and delusion, or if they are concocted, have *sati* stop that mess.



Legacy 39

‘Beauty is in the corpse, goodness is in giving up, the monk is in truth, Nibbāna is in dying before death.’ We have knocked the dust off of and recycled this antique saying in order to preserve the intelligence of our ancestors, to show how sharp, direct, and profound their understanding was. Further, so that their children and grandchildren will have no less intelligence than our ancestors, and will fully live up the meaning of being ‘Buddhist,’ by not locking away Nibbāna so that they must die over and over for thousands and millions of lives before getting any results. Please help to preserve this legacy of our ancestors.



Legacy 40

May we all cherish one special aim, that whether sooner or later, there will be an era in which the world is perfect in Dhamma through everyone performing their duties, through everyone being clearly mindful in their hearts that the correct duty is itself the Dhamma that will help keep us above all problems. This is possible because the world is always changing. You ought to support the conditions for such change in this world.



Legacy 41

If all people in the world object to bringing Dhamma into the world, because they think it's impossible, that's up to them. We alone, if need be, ought to make ourselves quench all *dukkha* with Dhamma that's up to the mark. Never be disappointed that so few people are interested in Dhamma.

All of the above are legacies of
a material or ceremonial kind.
They make up the first part of the 'Legacy'
I wish to leave behind.





Proofs of the book commemorating Ajahn's 80th birthday.
Ref. Archives document of the Buddhadasa Indapañño Archives
BIA 6.3/42.



Proofs of the book commemorating Ajahn's 80th birthday.
Ref. Archives document of the Buddhadasa Indapañño Archives
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About the Author

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu was born in 1906, the son of a southern Thai mother and an ethnic Chinese father. He followed Thai custom by entering a local monastery in 1926, studied for a couple years in Bangkok, and then founded his own refuge for study and practice in 1932. Since then, he has had a profound influence on not only Thai Buddhism but other religions in Siam and Buddhism in the West. Among his more important accomplishments, he:

- Challenged the hegemony of later commentarial texts with the primacy of the Buddha's original discourses.
- Integrated serious Dhamma study, intellectual creativity, and rigorous practice.
- Explained Buddha-Dhamma with an emphasis on this life, including the possibility of experiencing Nibbāna ourselves.

- Softened the dichotomy between householder and monastic practice, stressing that the noble eightfold path is available to everyone.
- Offered doctrinal support for addressing social and environmental issues, helping to foster socially engaged Buddhism in Siam.
- Shaped his forest monastery as an innovative teaching environment and Garden of Liberation.

After a series of illnesses, including strokes, he died in 1993. He was cremated without the usual pomp and expense.

About the Translator

Santikaro went to Thailand with the Peace Corps in 1980, was ordained as a Theravada monk in 1985, trained at Suan Mokkh under Ajahn Buddhādāsa, and became his primary English translator. Santikaro led meditation retreats at Suan Mokkh for many years, and was unofficial abbot of nearby Dawn Kiam. He is a founding member of Think Sangha, a community of socially engaged Buddhist thinker activists that has given special attention to the ethical and spiritual impact of consumerism and other modern developments.

Santikaro returned to the USA's Midwest in 2001 and retired from formal monastic life in 2004. He continues to teach in the Buddhist tradition with an emphasis on the early Pāli sources and the insights of Ajahn Buddhādāsa. He is the founder of Liberation Park, a modern American expression of Buddhist practice, study, and social responsibility in rural Wisconsin. There he continues to study, practice, translate the work of his teacher, teach, and imagine the future of Buddha-Dhamma in the West.

Recommended Reading (Books)

- *Mindfulness With Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners*
- *Handbook for Mankind*
- *The First Ten Years of Suan Mokkh*
- *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree*
- *Keys to Natural Truth*
- *The Prison of Life*
- *Paticcasamuppāda: Practical Dependent Origination*
- *Under the Bodhi Tree: Buddha's Original Vision of Dependent Co-Arising*

Online Resources

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Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives

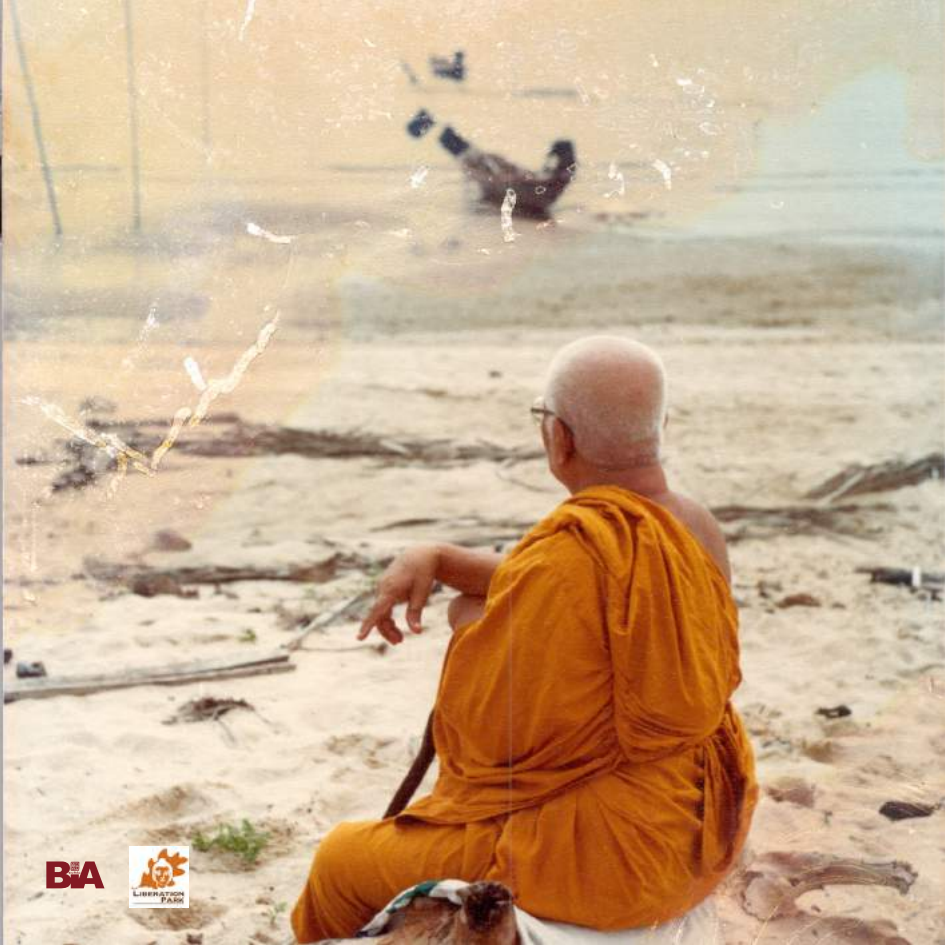
Established in 2010, the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives collect, maintain, and present the original works of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu. Also known as Suan Mokkh Bangkok, it is an innovative place for fostering mutual understanding between traditions, studying and practicing Dhamma.



Liberation Park

Liberation Park is a Dhamma refuge in the USA's Midwest inspired by Suan Mokkh. Here, Santikaro and friends work to nurture a garden of liberation along the lines taught by Ajahn Buddhadāsa, where followers of the Buddha-Dhamma Way can explore Dhamma as Nature and in the Pāli suttas.





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