

THE LIBERATING
TEACHINGS
OF
BUDDHADASA

ON *Suchness* תורה

As recorded by Santidhammo Bhikkhu aka Jack Kornfield

**THE LIBERATING TEACHINGS OF BUDDHADĀSA
ON SUCHNESS**

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Vachirabenjatas Park (Rot Fai Park) Nikom Rot Fai Sai 2 Rd., Chatuchak,
Bangkok, 10900 Thailand.
Tel. +66 2936 2800 Fax. +66 2936 2900
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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 Buddhādāsa 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

Buddhādāsa Indapañño

Mokkhabalārāma
Chaiya, 2 November 2530

Preface

The teachings in this notebook date from 1971. They are handwritten notes of the Dharma offered orally and in writing by Ajahn Buddhadasa. I lived there as a forest monk, and was drawn to Buddhadasa as Dharma revolutionary, a respected friend of Ajahn Chah, and inspiration to a whole generation.

In teachings and form, Buddhadasa stepped beyond the popular forms of Thai Buddhism and offered its pith and essence. Whether in the description of Everyday Nirvana, in the language of non-selfishness instead of non self, in teachings on the void and the turning from modern Buddha Images to the simplicity of a circle of stones in the forest under the trees, Buddhadasa offered pure and powerful Dharma to all who would listen.

May these words from a half century ago carry some of his liberating spirit.

Jack Kornfield
Spirit Rock Center
2017

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Suchness တရု

all world problems
can be {cured &
{Solved}

by seeing suchness!



VEN. BUDDHADASA
BHIKKHU

Seeing the suchness of what?

The suchness of all phenom.
ena. Seeing things as they are, all
that to which we are attached, and all
that to which we are not attached.

How do the world problems relate to suchness?

- ① Because we don't see suchness we
are enslaved by desire for delicious
tastes, delicious things, delicious ex-
periences of all kinds.

(2) Thus the modern world is continually involved in inventing attractive things, with each nation competing to provide more and better attractive things than the next.

(3) Our mental slavery leads us on. Conflicts abound, war and hatred between nations has become our way of life. We have lost the way to solve our problems.

(4) Now we are in the process of annihilating the very wealth of nature, the environment which supports life

on this planet, At the same time,
we continue to destroy world peace.

And all for exactly the same reason.

(5) Together these are the full expression of the forces of greed, hatred and delusion, resulting in a world-wide human lifestyle which is shameful. Even our dogs and cats live same lives by comparison.

Stop! how can we undo this complex of problems?

All these ills can be cured if the

citizens of the world can see its suchness.

What is suchness?

One who realized suchness was called Tathagata. [tatha + gata]

Yet even before there is anyone to realize suchness, suchness exists.

Whether there is one to realize it or not, suchness remains, perpetually.

Synonyms of suchness:

Tathā - Suchness

Tathatā - State of being such

Avitathatā - Not different from suchness

na ^{na} ~~ā~~ ^{Thata} tathā - Not other than suchness

Dhamma^ḥ hitatā - Existing in a natural state of being

Dhammaniyāmata - Absolute Truth of nature

Ida^p ~~ḥ~~ ^ḥ paccayā^ḥ ttā - Having this condition, this happens thus, etc.

How to look for suchness :

To understand suchness we must use the tools of science, not the

thoughts ^{and speculation} of philosophy. We must directly examine our experience as it exists at this moment in our mind.

We must look carefully at the everchanging experiences, ^{look} directly at our own mind. This practice, called vipassana, involves no reasoning, no speculating, no induction, no thinking ^{and} no logic. It is just seeing things as they are.

When seeing suchness:

① When we see suchness we see clearly the three characteristics of all things. We see that every single experience is impermanent, is incapable of bringing any lasting satisfaction (so is ultimately disappointing and painful) and we see that no ^(part of everchanging) experience can be grasped as a self, as I or mine.

② When we see suchness we see the individual characteristics in each

thing. We see its nature to cause suffering through our attachment and its nature to allow peace through our letting go.

(3) When we see suchness we see that each thing follows the law of dependent origination

Example #1:

Here is how we can see suchness through examining the process of dependent origination in our moment to moment experience. If we investigate

we will see that -

A) The ~~INTERNAL~~ SENSE ORGANS.

(indriya)

with their system of nerves are suchness.

They exist naturally, without any I or self or owner, any 'one' who has sense organs. To see this is to see suchness.

Repeated Below

B) The EXTERNAL SENSE OBJECTS.

(sapey, atmana)

along with their meaning or value to us are suchness. They... 

(repeated from above)

C) The CONSCIOUSNESS (vijnana) or knowing

which results depending upon the sense organs and sense objects is suchness.

It ^{arises} ~~exists~~ ... 

(repeated from above)

D) The CONTACT (Passa) which results from the coming together of sense objects, sense organs and consciousness is suchness.

It ~~exists~~ arises naturally ooo (repeated from above) ⊗.

E) The FEELING (Vedana) which results from contact is suchness. It arises naturally ooo (repeated from above) ⊗.

[Normally we sense ourselves as "I", a person having contact and feeling. Actually there is only the arising of contact, feeling and consciousness, but no I or one who exists to whom these belong.]

F) The DESIRE (tanha), the ^{created} "want", by ~~mean~~ ignorance ^{based on} ~~in accordance~~ with feeling is suchness. It arises ... (repeated from above) ⊗ ...

G) The ATTACHMENT (upadana) the pro-
duce of ignorant desire is suchness. It
arises ... (repeat above) ⊗ ...

H) The CREATION (bhava) or pregnancy
of the sense of self is suchness. It
arises ... (repeat fr. above...) ⊗ ... who is created. To
see this is to see suchness.)

I) The BIRTH or full bloom of the
mis-concept of a self, ^{or "I"} is suchness. It
arises ... (repeated fr. above...) ⊗ ... who is born. To see this

is to see suchness.

Example #2:

MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING (Anapanasati).

Here is how we can see suchness in the development of the mindfulness of breathing meditation.

Suchness is the characteristic of each of the levels and experiences in this practice is suchness. Therefore —

In the BREATH and BODY - LEVEL I

⊗ The breath [exists naturally and should be seen as suchness.]

⊗ Repeat

- ① The shock ~~to the~~ ...
- ② The long ~~and short~~ breath ...
- ③ The breath body in the physical body ...
- ④ The calming of the breath body and physical body ...

In the FEELINGS - LEVEL II

- ① The feelings that arise _{thus} ...
- ② The happiness that arises ...
- ③ The rapture that arises ...

In the MIND - LEVEL III

- The mind as it ~~arises~~ in each moment ...
- ① The joyful quality which arises ...
 - ② The mindful " " " " ...
 - ③ The ^{stability} ~~stable~~ ~~mind~~ which " " ...
 - ④ The released which " ...

In the DHAMMA - Level IV

④ The Dhamma exists ...

① Impermanence (anicca) exists ...

② The lessening of attachment (viraga) exists ...

③ The extinction ^(nirodha) which arises exists ...

④ That state beyond attachment (Patisvaccā)

where all is relinquished and thrown

back to its ^{original} ~~real~~ owner, even this ~~state~~

is suchness. ~~exists naturally and should be~~

~~seen as only suchness.~~ Before this

we had stolen the property of nature

for ourselves, for I, me, mine to hold,

but now having seen the truth we

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abandon all such attachments and fetters. Even this suchness exists naturally and should be seen as only suchness.

Method OF PRACTICE TO SEE SUCHNESS:

- (1) First we should sit until we can clearly see the struggle and conflict that exists in our mind.
- (2) Then we must see the resulting suffering which this causes us to endure and undergo. Having seen this

we must also see its distasteful, unpleasant and ugly quality.

(3) Finally we must see all that we carry as the Burden of Life.

The way out :

To see truly means to perceive so clearly that we naturally wish to let go, to get out of ~~it~~ ~~leave~~ and ~~relinquish~~ our suffering.

If we don't want to leave, to relinquish it, this means we have

not yet seen it clearly.

Wishing to be released we must then follow the way out. The way out is just this:

VIRTUE, CONCENTRATION and WISDOM.

VIRTUE (sila) - Practicing virtue means cultivating a directness and moral straightness in relation to the body and the world around us. Living virtuously allows us to concentrate the mind with ease.

CONCENTRATION (samadhi) - Practicing concentration means developing the inner eye, ~~the~~ ^{an} inner strength of mind. ~~called concentration.~~ This concentration when developed is used to practice vipassana

WISDOM (pañña) - Practicing wisdom or vipassana means seeing clearly and directly. It is a way of seeing that goes far deeper than reasoning or speculating.

The FRUIT OF VIPASSANA PRACTICE:

- ① Seeing the suchness of all things.

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(2) Seeing the voidness of all things;
that they are void of self.

(3) Seeing Anatta, that all things are not I, me, mine, self and ought not be called self (atta).

Seeing these 3 things brings this result:

Equanimity is established in relation to all experience. Nothing is able to disturb or overwhelm the mind.

FURTHER ADVANTAGES WHICH ARISE FROM PRACTISING VIPASSANA:

A) Letting go of those things to

which we have been attached and stopping our tendency to grasp at new things.

Thus we are release from bondage to all things which have previously enslaved us. This ^{automatically} gives birth to

NIRVANA (coolness), ^{automatically} the highest happiness, ^(a complete) freedom ^{which} arises spontaneously (and is free of charge).

B) For the layman who ~~practises~~ practices you will develop a way of living which is:

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| happy | Quiet | simple |
| harmonious | Contented | slow |
| whole | Calm | sweet |
| | Clear | stress-free |
| | Cool Quenched | smiling |
| | Creative Relaxed | |
| | and Full of the smile of wisdom. | |

At all times - forever!

You will no longer feel the Burden of Life. Nothing will ~~make~~ be able to make you fall in love or fall in anger or fall in fear, etc.

C) FOR YOGIS, this practice will develop the path and fruit of NIRVANA. ^{You will experience,} ~~that is,~~ the delight of a life of coolness, the quenching of the mind to the utmost degree.

When SHOULD WE LOOK FOR SUCHNESS?

AT ALL TIMES.

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Especially ^{try to} see suchness:

- ① When practicing vipassana using the breath as explained above.
- ② Whenever any wonderful experience has just finished (after a superb meal, wonderful sex, a great movie, we must see its suchness. It is only this.)
- ③ Whenever we experience suffering or frustration, (although we may be afraid to look, this is a valuable time to see suchness.)
- ④ In watching the process of Dependent origination which is constantly

manifesting in our daily life (as described above.).

See suchness in all things.

By seeing suchness (tathata) we will see all the factors of dependent origination, the causes and end of our suffering. Seeing suchness as the nature of things brings coolness and emancipation to the heart and mind, and to the world.

Sabbē dhammā na lam abhinivesāya

all Dhammas ~~ought~~ ^{are} not to be ~~attached to~~ ^{grasped.}

Sabbē dhammā tathā,
dhammas of
All ~~dhammas~~ are suchness.



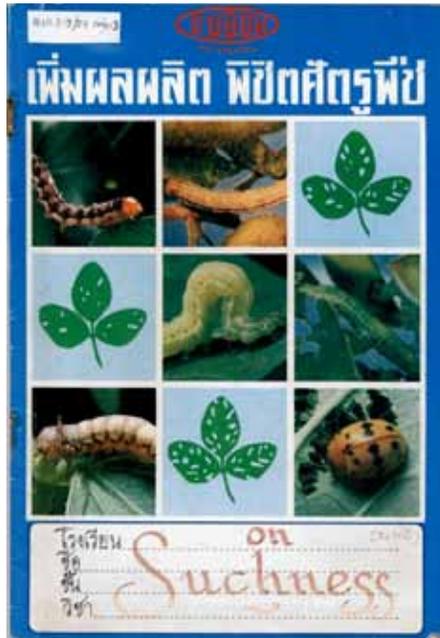
JACK KORNFIELD
PRA SANTI DHAMMO BH.
INSIGHT MEDITATION SOCIETY
PLEASANT ST.
BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS
U.S.A. 01005

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.



Notebook used by Santidhammo Bhikkhu aka Jack Kornfield in 1971.

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Recommended Reading (Books)

by *Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu*

- Mindfulness With Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners
- Handbook for Mankind
- The First Ten Years of Suan Mokkh
- Buddha-Dhamma for Students
- Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree
- Keys to Natural Truth
- The Prison of Life
- Patīcasamuppāda: Practical Dependent Origination
- Under the Bodhi Tree: Buddha's Original Vision of Dependent Co-Arising
- A Single Bowl of Sauce: Teachings Beyond Good and Evil

by *Jack Kornfield*

- Living Dharma: Teachings and Meditation Instructions from Twelve Theravada Masters
- After the Ecstasy, the Laundry: How the Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path

Online Resources

www.suanmokkh.org

www.jackkornfield.com

www.bia.or.th



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