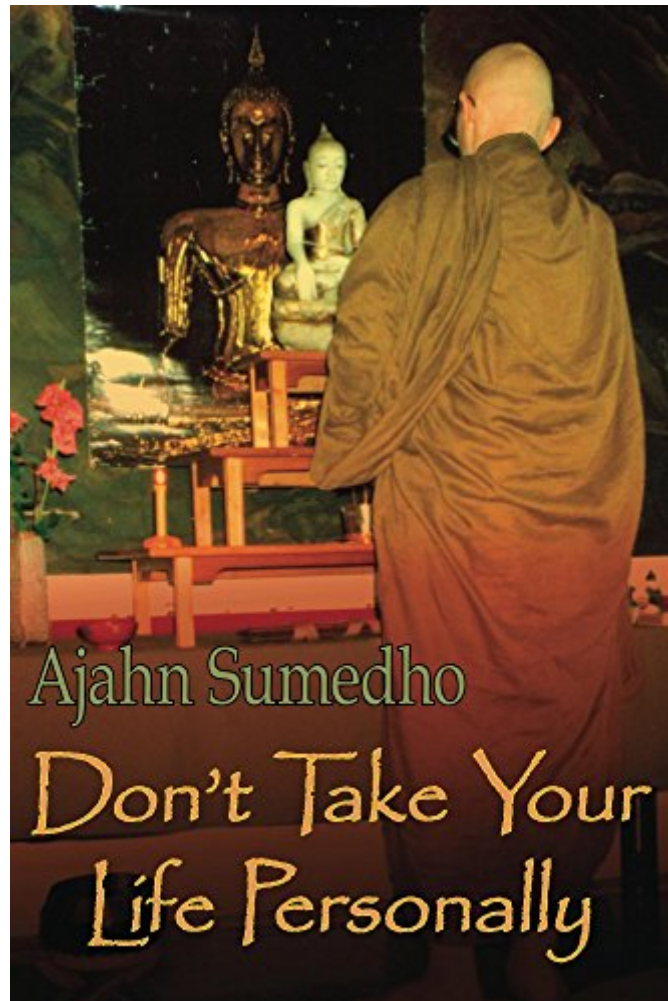




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Don't Take Your Life Personally



Synopsis

Ajahn Sumedho urges us to trust in awareness and find out for ourselves what it is to experience genuine liberation from mental anguish and suffering, just as the Buddha himself did two and a half thousand years ago. Ajahn Sumedho, an American Buddhist monk, practised for ten years in Thailand with the well known monk, Ajahn Chah. He has since spent over thirty years in England and is the founder of the Cittaviveka Forest Monastery in West Sussex and the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in Hertfordshire.

“Mindfulness or awareness is knowing. It is a direct knowing, immanent here and now. It is being fully present, attentive to this present moment as is. But defining mindfulness tends to make it into something and then it is no longer mindfulness. Mindfulness is not a thing; it is a recognition, an intuitive awareness; it is awareness without grasping.”

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The 1st time I read Ajahn Sumedho's "Don't Take your Life..." I liked it, but felt it could've/should've been edited. Two months later, I've picked it up again, and am now approaching the end of my 2nd

time to read it from cover to cover: What changed? me. I could see my games better when I went back to this book. Thank goodness for Sumedho's bare-bones honesty about the workings of his own mind and thanks for his main meditation instruction: "Be with what's happening, now." (But do so kindly, without effort, etc.) The classical sutras/scriptures in Tibetan Buddhism don't address the Western mind and our low-self esteem issues (no matter if that comes out by our being highly competitively, depressed and/or everything in the middle.) That's because beating up on one's self historically wasn't part of the Tibetan's world view. Sumedho's book integrates observing yourself/your thoughts and every day life in a way you might find helpful, no matter if you're a Buddhist or not.

This is an open door to Buddhism. Sumedho is a gifted explainer who makes even the complicated understandable. He is concrete, specific and pragmatic and offers a view of Buddhism not as something just to read about and puzzle about but as a set of beneficial practices to bring into daily life. His focus is on the most immediate and accessible aspects of human experience. He doesn't ask the reader to have faith in texts or the experiences of historical figures or acclaimed contemporary leaders. He invites the reader to simply do these things with openness and persistence and see what happens. Less suffering? Yes or no.

Ajan Sumedho's teaching is so clear and simple it makes you stop and think--can it really be so? This series of lectures at the Buddhist Summer School run by The Buddhist Publishing Group during Sumedho's last few years of teaching in the west (I believe he's retired in Thailand) may feel repetitive because of the nature of lectures--but what Sumedho repeats needs repeating for most of us. He asks us to take refuge in awareness and brings that important message home through stories of his own life and his own mistakes in his early life as a Buddhist monk. I am reminded of Zen master Bankei who tells us over and over to remain in the unborn and Ramana Maharshi who constantly brings us back to the question 'who am I.' The only difference is that Sumedho lives in the modern world, so some of his examples are easier for modern man to relate to than those of some of the ancients. I have listened to Sumedho's lectures and purchased his other books--being satisfied with all of them, but this is his best. I am grateful to have come across this wonderful, humble teacher.

Words will never capture the truth, but from my personal experience, this work has come closest to any in doing so. May all beings be blessed enough to gain insight through wisdom and awaken.

Cutting through the barriers of concepts and conventions, Ajahn Sumedho helps the reader return again and again to "just this", right here and now. Taking a gentle, non sectarian approach, he helps the reader recognise that enlightenment is not something to achieve but rather a matter of recognising that which is always available.

Ajahn Sumedho makes Buddhism understandable to followers who have wrestled with the concepts of the belief system.

What a terrific book! As soon as I finished it - I enjoyed a deep breath - and then reread it. Ajahn Sumedho IS an Arahant

Only halfway through but I love this book!

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