

# BEING PEACE



THICH NHAT HANH

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*Illustrated by Mayumi Oda*

*Introduction by Jack Kornfield*



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# CONTENTS

Introduction by Jack Kornfield ~ 9

1: Suffering Is Not Enough ~ 13

2: The Three Gems ~ 21

3: Feelings and Perceptions ~ 39

4: The Heart of Practice ~ 51

5: Working for Peace ~ 65

6: Interbeing ~ 85

7: Meditation in Daily Life ~ 109



# Introduction

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JACK KORNFIELD

IN THIS WONDERFUL BOOK, Thich Nhat Hanh teaches us the reality of interdependence: “Even if I just clap my hands, the effect is everywhere, in the faraway galaxies.”

In 2007, we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of *Being Peace*. The publication of this seminal book and the Dharma teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh have had an extraordinary effect on Dharma practice in the Western world, especially visible here in America. At once simple and yet profound, poetic and clear, compassionate and inspiring, the writings and teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh have transformed Buddhist teachings from a distant ideal into the immediacy of the awakened heart.

The Buddhist ancient stories tell how just the simple presence of a master is enough to touch the seeds of awakening in all those around. Just as the fragrances of jasmine and rosebay and sandalwood bring beauty, the fragrance of one who walks and speaks in harmony with the Dharma brings blessings wherever they go.

I've seen Thich Nhat Hanh walk slowly and mindfully into a gathering of thousands of people and the simple power of his presence radiates a joy and peace that spreads to all those present. In the same way, the gracious and heartfelt writing you hold in your hands calms the mind and opens the heart of wisdom.

Through his being and his words, Thich Nhat Hanh invites us into the reality of the present. Because he is a poet, his language has beauty, intimacy, and rich texture that illuminate the mind. Because he is courageous, he willingly pierces our great heart of compassion, so that we can bow to burning huts and sea pirates, to the sorrows of the world and those who cause sorrows. Because he is wise, his simple words speak to the most obvious Dharma and to the truly profound levels of Buddha's awakening, all at one time. In doing so, he simultaneously unites the great Buddhist schools of Theravada and Mahayana, following the rich legacy of Vietnamese Dharma.

Thich Nhat Hanh has helped us to see the depths of dependent origination in a flower. In the midst of it all he has taught us to breathe, to smile, to live with a free heart. And most importantly, in our troubled world he makes no false division between inner awakening and engaged compassion. To his eye, like his spiritual ancestor Mahatma Gandhi, every being matters, everything is sacred.

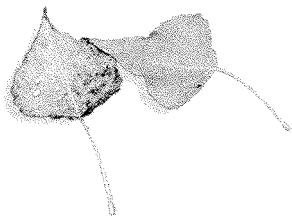
For well over half a century this revolutionary monk has spread the teachings of *Being Peace*. This book is a treasure. If you look deeply, you will see in it the seeds of all Thich Nhat Hanh's most important teachings, and the seeds of your own awakening as well.

May it bless all who touch its beautiful words.

With Metta,  
Jack Kornfield

Spirit Rock Meditation Center, 2005

*If we are peaceful, if we are happy,  
we can blossom like a flower,  
and everyone in our family,  
our entire society,  
will benefit from our peace.*





# 1

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## SUFFERING IS NOT ENOUGH

LIFE IS FILLED with suffering, but it is also filled with many wonders, such as the blue sky, the sunshine, and the eyes of a baby. To suffer is not enough. We must also be in touch with the wonders of life. They are within us and all around us, everywhere, anytime.

If we are not happy, if we are not peaceful, we can't share peace and happiness with others, even those we love, those who live under the same roof. If we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can smile and blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace. Do we need to make a special effort to enjoy the beauty of the blue sky? Do we have to practice to be able to enjoy it? No, we just enjoy it. Each second, each minute of our lives can be like this. Wherever we are, anytime, we have the capacity to enjoy the sunshine, the presence of each other, even the sensation of our breathing. We don't need to go to China to enjoy the blue sky. We don't have to travel into the future to enjoy our breathing. We can be in touch with these things right now. It would be a pity if we were only aware of suffering.

We are so busy we hardly have time to look at the people we love, even in our own household, and to look at ourselves. Society is organized in a way that even when we have some leisure