

# 2024 JANUARY - AUGUST HEARTWOOD OF THE BODHI TREE

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## A CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNEY

**DATES 2024 – 3<sup>RD</sup> THURSDAYS OF EACH MONTH  
(BEGINNING JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup> & ENDING AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup>)  
TIME 7:00-8:00 PM CENTRAL TIME (USA)**

## ONLINE VIA ZOOM

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Human life is at heart a **contemplative journey of deepening wisdom, kindness, ethics, and freedom**. In a classic reflection on the Buddha's teaching of voidness (*suññatā*, emptiness), Ajahn Buddhadasa surveys how *suññatā* is integral within the original path of awakening. He connects a wide variety of dhammas to voidness and surveys the important ways of encountering and realizing voidness. All dhammas — phenomena, qualities, and virtues — lead to *suññatā*.

*Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* is grounded in the original *suññatā* teachings found in the Pāli suttas and doesn't pursue the more philosophical approaches of some later Buddhist schools. This means the emphasis is on practice, including freeing our views and opinions of perspectives that obstruct the realization of voidness. This requires the **practice of inquiry and contemplation broadly within the activities of quotidian life, as well as in meditation**.

Emptiness can be realized in all events and activities. In other words, this course will foster the factors of awakening in service of *suññatā*: mindfulness, month-by-month examination (*dhammavicaya*), vigor, joy, tranquility, composure, and equanimity.

*Heartwood* explores *suññatā* through contemplation of dependent co-arising, through mindful awareness of sensory experience, and in the "ordinary times" when heart-mind isn't riled up. Ajahn Buddhadasa also considers *suññatā* and the approach of death.

**Course Format:** We will meet the third Thursday evening of each month to focus on one or two chapters of *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree*. A schedule of which chapters will be covered each month will be on [the course's home page](#). Please read them a few weeks in advance of the meeting, pondering the meaning, and consider how to incorporate in your daily practice of the path of awakening. Reread again a couple days before each session; after all, most months will focus on only a dozen pages or so. When we meet, Santikaro will draw attention

to a few highlights of each chapter and then open the conversation for comments, insights, and questions. Soon afterwards, you will be emailed a summary of themes to contemplate in the weeks ahead. The recording will be available within a day, in case you couldn't attend live or wish to relisten.

Of course, you will **need your own copy** of *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree*, which can be ordered from Wisdom Publications in print or ebook. (An older translation with a somewhat different title won't be sufficient.)

**Between meetings:** You are welcome to share insights and questions with Santikaro. He will post some of these through the course's home page and respond as appropriate. You are encouraged to check for such posts weekly.

**Dates:** February 15, March 21, April 25 (due to a retreat), May 16, June 20, July 18, and August 15. If a date must change, there will be ample warning.

**Registration:** Fill out [this on-line form](#) and send [\\$100 registration fee following the information here](#). This fee is to encourage commitment to full participation. Nobody will be refused because of inability to pay this fee. Please email us [if you cannot afford the fee](#) so that we can make other arrangements.

Once you have registered, you'll receive an email giving access to [the course's Home Page \(a Google Doc\)](#), which will be the on-line hub for information concerning this course, including the Zoom link, schedule, and links to recordings.

**Recordings:** If you must miss a meeting, please listen to the recordings that will be posted on [the course's Home Page](#).

**Resources:** Santikaro will share articles, links, and recordings through the course's Home Page.

**Reciprocal support:** The Buddha's teachings, sanghas of training and practice, places of practice, and practice resources involve the hard work of many people, technical skills, financial generosity, and an overall spirit of reciprocal service. As a participant in this course, in addition to the registration payment, we ask you to support our work in ways suitable to your means and abilities. The kindness of others has made this course possible; your help insures that such activities continue. Please [visit our dāna page on a regular basis](#).

**Occasional retreats:** If a retreat coincides with one of our meetings, Santikaro will reschedule an alternative date for that meeting.

**Any questions?** Please [email Santikaro](#).