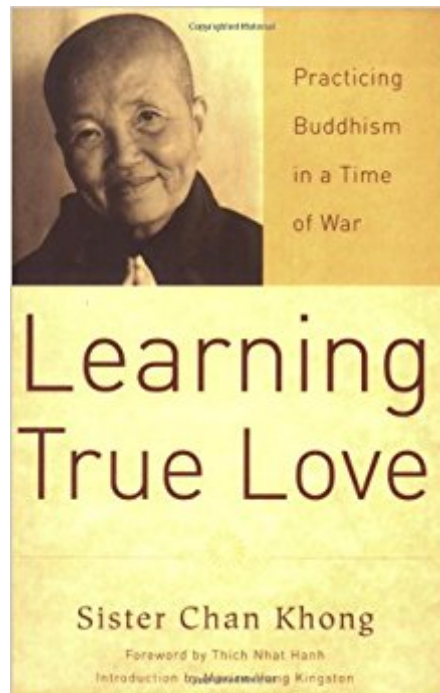




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# Learning True Love: Practicing Buddhism In A Time Of War



## Synopsis

Learning True Love, the autobiography of Sister ChÃ©n KhÃ©ng, stands alongside the great spiritual autobiographies of our century. It tells the story of her spiritual and personal odyssey, both in her homeland and in exile. Its anecdotal style presents an intensely personal portrait of a woman with astonishing courage, offering us a perspective on the suffering of the Vietnamese people. This unique autobiography tells the gripping story of a woman who not only lived but made history, and whose life of single-minded dedication to humanity can serve as an inspiration for us all. Sister ChÃ©n KhÃ©ng was born in a village on the Mekong River Delta in 1938. In her teens she devoted her life to the development and practice of nonviolence grounded in the Buddhist precepts of non-killing and compassionate action. Propelled by her passionate dedication to social change, she began working in the slums of Saigon, distributing food, working with the sick, and teaching children. When she was 21 years old she met the man who until to this day remains her teacher and spiritual companion: Thich Nhat Hanh. With him she co-founded the School of Youth for Social Service in 1964, which grew to an organization of over 10,000 young people organizing medical, educational, and agricultural facilities in rural Vietnam, and rebuilding villages destroyed in the fighting. Sister ChÃ©n KhÃ©ng became well known in the anti-war and peace community for her work promoting human rights and protesting repression and violence, often at risk of her own life. She continues to do this work today.Â After the war she became one of the co-founders of Plum Village, the spiritual center, that is home to Thich Nhat Hanh's community in France, where she continues to be deeply involved in the development and vision for this unique community. In January of 2005, after nearly 40 years in exile, Sister ChÃ©n KhÃ©ng was able to return on a 3-month visit to Vietnam. In this fully revised edition of Learning True Love she movingly describes the return to her homeland, the reunions with many old friends and fellow activists, and shares her impression of the "new Vietnam," where Buddhists still struggle for religious freedom and the re-establishment of their own organizations.Â Learning True Love is a moving personal memoir, an introduction to the mindfulness teachings and life of Thich Nhat Hanh and his community in exile, an overview to the development of the European and American peace and human rights movement, and an introduction to the engaged and practical style of Vietnamese Buddhism. It documents the process that brought an end to the US Vietnam war, and gives a lively summary of Vietnamese history from 1945 to the current political, social and spiritual climate in Vietnam. Learning True Love also portraits some of the many remarkable people that shared Sister ChÃ©n KhÃ©ng 's path. Foremost however it is the remarkable and impressive story of a very courageous woman, whose journey from an accredited biologist at the University of Paris to a Buddhist nun, gives her unique insight

into life's central questions and the ability to address them in an unflinching and straightforward manner.Â Forewords by Thich Nhat Hanh and Maxine Hong-Kingston

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This work is a transcript of taped "Dharma talks" given by a Vietnamese Buddhist nun who has dedicated her life to the poor and destitute of her homeland, both inside Vietnam and in exile from abroad. Alas, the English is often poor, and the strings of reminiscences are recorded in a chaotic style. In addition, very few details specific to Chan's Buddhist worldview are explained adequately, if at all. These shortcomings hurt the effectiveness of a fascinating story. This is a rare example of a social, rather than a political or historical, perspective on Vietnam that could potentially be of interest to the general public. However, in its current form, it cannot be recommended.- Ria Koopmans de Bruijn, C.V. Starr East Asian Lib., Columbia Univ., New YorkCopyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Sister ChÃn KhÃ'ng (birth name Cao Ngoc Phuong) was born in a village on the Mekong River Delta in 1938. She has devoted her life to the development and practice of nonviolence grounded in the Buddhist precepts of non-killing and compassionate action. She is part of the community of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh and lives in Plum Village, France.

This is a book of many purposes. You may be interested in the peace movement, practical

Buddhism, the Vietnam War, neutrality, or a hundred other human topics, and this book will do more than just meet your interest. It will inform, but it will also inspire. It will teach, but it will also motivate. It will calm, but it will also kindle. Why? You will find here the first-person perspective and journey of the author through the difficulties of not only the Vietnam War, but personal relationships and choices and commitments. In such essential and groundbreaking work, there are wonderful seasons of success and painful times of disappointment. This book teaches in three ways: through what is written, by personal example, and by the larger unfolding story of how people and events intersect with life choices. I did not find it hard to take the author's experiences and apply some of the insights to my own life. Some have commented negatively on the writing, but I was so carried by the telling that I did not notice. Although parts of the story itself may be difficult to read through, the narrative is easy to follow and digest as you proceed. I found the book true to its title; you also can learn something of true love by reading and reflecting.

This is a beautiful gem of a book. The author has much wisdom and humility. She is a true master in balancing courage and compassion. Anyone interested in social work, peace work or Buddhism can learn from it. For anyone who has enjoyed the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh (as I have) and / or been curious about the experiences of devout Buddhists in Vietnam, this book will provide you with a picture of how daily struggles and major decisions were reconciled.

Through her book, I came to know of the struggles, pains that the ordinary Vietnamese suffered during the difficult years. And the sacrifices and heroic stories of the many bodhisattvas like Sister Chan Kong, Master Thich Nhat Hanh and many many others. I salute them for their courage in stepping outside of orthodox buddhism to put it into practice. I cried through many of the pages. Thank you so much for showing the world especially buddhists how to put compassion and understanding into action and what true love is all about. Great BOOK! It is my first kindle book.

Clear, pure voice of a bodhisattva. Inspiring and beautiful.

I was blown away by every page, every chapter. Sister Chan Khong is a superwoman and a true living Bodhisattva.

This is the autobiography of a Vietnamese Buddhist nun who spent her life trying to help people whose lives were devastated by the wars. Because of her close association with Thich Nhat Hanh, it

is to some degree an informal history of his activities as well. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is her frustration with the American peace movement. Her life (and his) are both quite inspiring, so this is a challenging and uplifting book. I would happily recommend this book to anyone interested in Vietnamese Buddhism, the war and the peace movements, or Vietnam in general.

Incredible first hand history of Vietnam during the war told by a Buddhist Nun.

Very inspiring book. Sister Chan Khong's radiant energy and the true love she feels for humanity permeate this book. She shows us one of the beautiful lessons of Buddhism, that we are all capable of being bodhisattvas in our own lives. We each have the power to help others in need and help ourselves. A heartwarming reminder of how wonderful the present moment really is.

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