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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Topics:

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Main content:

1: Dharma talk: Paying Respects to all buddhas

Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, everyone! Paying respects to all Buddhas is a core practice in Buddhism, expressing reverence, gratitude, and humility toward the enlightened beings who have realized the truth of the Dharma. This practice is a form of veneration and an acknowledgment of the wisdom, compassion, and teachings that Buddhas provide to help sentient beings on the path to enlightenment.

Ways to Pay Respect to All Buddhas:

1. Bowing and Prostration

One of the most common forms of paying respects is through bowing or prostrating before images of the Buddha. This practice is not an act of worship in the theistic sense but rather a gesture of deep respect and humility, recognizing the Buddha's wisdom and the path he taught. It helps cultivate humility, reduce ego, and open the heart to the teachings.

Three Prostrations: Often, Buddhists bow or prostrate three times. Each bow typically symbolizes respect for the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community of practitioners).

2. Offering

Offering is another way to pay respect, often seen in Buddhist temples where practitioners offer incense, flowers, candles, fruits, or other symbolic items to Buddha statues or images. The act of offering reflects generosity and gratitude.

Incense symbolizes the purification of the mind and body.

Flowers represent the impermanence of life.

Candles or lamps signify the light of wisdom dispelling the darkness of ignorance.

These offerings are not meant to appease the Buddha, but to remind the practitioner of essential Buddhist principles like impermanence and compassion.

3. Chanting and Recitation

Reciting Buddhist sutras, mantras, or prayers is a way to honor the teachings of all Buddhas. Chanting helps internalize the teachings and connects the practitioner to the lineage of Buddhas, invoking their wisdom and guidance. Common chants include:

The Heart Sutra or Lotus Sutra in Mahayana Buddhism.

The recitation of Namo Amitufo in Pure Land Buddhism to honor Amitabha Buddha.

Namo Tassa Bhagavato in Theravada Buddhism, which means "Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One."

4. Meditation and Mindfulness

Meditation is another powerful way to pay respects to all Buddhas. By engaging in meditation, practitioners embody the path that the Buddha himself took toward enlightenment. Mindfulness, too, honors the teachings of the Buddha by applying awareness and compassion to every action in daily life. Metta (Loving-kindness) meditation: Spreading loving-kindness to all beings, honoring the compassionate teachings of the Buddha.

Vipassana (Insight) meditation: Cultivating deep awareness of the nature of reality, following the path laid out by the Buddha.

5. Following the Precepts

One of the most direct ways to pay respect to all Buddhas is by living in accordance with the Dharma—practicing ethical conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom. Following the Five Precepts (abstaining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxication) or the more extensive precepts for monastics, is a way to honor the teachings.

By practicing virtue and compassion, a person becomes a living reflection of the Buddha's teachings.

6. Spreading the Dharma

Paying respect to the Buddha can also be done by sharing the teachings with others. By explaining, teaching, or even guiding others on the path, practitioners help keep the Dharma alive and available for all sentient beings, just as past Buddhas intended.

7. Cultivating Bodhicitta

In Mahayana Buddhism, cultivating Bodhicitta, the aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, is seen as a profound way of paying respect to all Buddhas. By aspiring to follow the path of the Bodhisattva, one aligns their life with the compassionate mission of all Buddhas: to relieve the suffering of all beings and guide them toward liberation.

8. Pilgrimage to Sacred Sites

Many Buddhists undertake pilgrimages to sites associated with the Buddha's life, such as Lumbini (where he was born), Bodh Gaya (where he attained enlightenment), Sarnath (where he gave his first teachings), and Kushinagar (where he entered Nirvana). Visiting these places is considered a powerful way to connect with the Buddha's life and teachings, and to pay homage to all Buddhas.

Paying respects to all Buddhas is a practice deeply embedded in Buddhist devotion and spiritual development. It reflects not only gratitude for the teachings but also a commitment to embodying those teachings in one's life. Through reverence, mindfulness, and ethical living, practitioners honor the Buddha's wisdom and cultivate the qualities necessary for their own journey toward enlightenment.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Red Beans

Red beans, particularly adzuki beans, are a staple in many Buddhist diets due to their numerous health benefits and versatile use in vegetarian and vegan dishes. Red beans are especially popular in East Asian cultures and are often used in sweet and savory dishes, including soups, buns, and desserts. Let's explore how red beans fit into a Buddhist diet and their health benefits.

Nutritional Benefits of Red Beans:

Red beans are highly nutritious and offer a range of health benefits, making them an excellent component of a Buddhist diet focused on health and well-being.

1. High in Protein

As a plant-based protein source, red beans are particularly valuable for vegetarians and vegans. Protein is essential for muscle repair, immune function, and overall health. In a Buddhist diet, where meat and animal products are often avoided, red beans serve as a key protein substitute.

2. Rich in Fiber

Red beans are an excellent source of dietary fiber, which promotes healthy digestion. Fiber aids in regulating bowel movements, preventing constipation, and supporting gut health. It also helps manage blood sugar levels and supports heart health by lowering cholesterol.

3. Packed with Antioxidants

Red beans are rich in antioxidants, particularly polyphenols, which help to protect the body from oxidative stress and reduce inflammation. Antioxidants are vital for preventing chronic diseases, including heart disease and cancer, and they support overall cellular health.

4. Supports Heart Health

The combination of fiber, potassium, magnesium, and antioxidants in red beans contributes to heart health. Potassium helps regulate blood pressure, while fiber and antioxidants work to lower cholesterol levels, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

5. Low in Fat and Calories

Red beans are low in fat and calories, making them an ideal food for those who are looking to maintain a healthy weight. Their high fiber content also makes them filling, which can help with appetite control and preventing overeating.

6. Rich in Essential Minerals

Red beans contain important minerals such as:

Iron: Essential for producing hemoglobin and preventing anemia, which can be especially important in plant-based diets.

Magnesium: Supports muscle function and bone health.

Folate: Vital for cell growth and development, particularly important for women of childbearing age.

In some Buddhist cultures, red beans hold a symbolic meaning of good fortune and prosperity. They are often used in festive foods during special occasions such as the Lunar New Year or Buddhist celebrations, offering both sustenance and symbolic value.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Red bean paste bun



Ingredients:

For the Dough:

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup warm water

1/4 cup sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

For the Red Bean Paste Filling:

1 cup sweetened red bean paste (store-bought or homemade)

Steps:

1. Make the Dough

Activate the Yeast:

In a small bowl, combine the warm water, sugar, and active dry yeast. Stir gently and let it sit for 5–10 minutes until the yeast becomes frothy.

Mix the Dough:

In a large mixing bowl, add the flour, salt, and oil. Pour the activated yeast mixture into the flour mixture and mix until a dough forms.

Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for about 8–10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic.

Let the Dough Rise:

Place the kneaded dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a damp cloth or plastic wrap, and let it rise in a warm place for about 1 hour, or until it doubles in size.

2. Prepare the Red Bean Paste Filling

If using store-bought sweetened red bean paste, divide it into small balls (about 1 tablespoon each) to make it easier to fill the buns.

If making your own red bean paste:

Cook adzuki beans until soft, mash them, and mix with sugar to your desired sweetness.

3. Shape the Buns

Punch down the risen dough to release the air, then divide it into 10 equal pieces.

Roll each piece of dough into a ball and flatten it into a round disk with a rolling pin.

Place a ball of red bean paste in the center of the dough disk.

Wrap the dough around the red bean paste, pinching the edges together to seal it tightly. Place the seam side down on a small square of parchment paper.

4. Let the Buns Rise Again

Arrange the buns on a tray, cover them with a cloth, and let them rest for another 20–30 minutes to allow them to puff up slightly.

5. Steam the Buns

Set up a steamer and bring the water to a boil.

Once the water is boiling, place the buns (along with the parchment paper) into the steamer, leaving space between them.

Cover the steamer and steam the buns over medium-high heat for about 12–15 minutes, or until they are fully cooked and fluffy.

6. Serve

Once done, remove the buns from the steamer and allow them to cool slightly before serving.