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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Topics:

1: Dharma talk: According Rejoicing for Meritorious Virtues

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Main content:

1: Dharma talk: According Rejoicing for Meritorious Virtues

Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, everyone! Rejoicing in Meritorious Virtues is an important practice in Buddhism that allows individuals to accumulate merit by genuinely celebrating the good deeds and virtuous actions of others. This practice is not limited to one's own actions but extends to the acknowledgment and joyful recognition of the merits gained by others, including the merits of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, the Sangha, and even ordinary beings.

Meaning and Importance of Rejoicing in Merits

In Buddhism, merit (punya) is a form of spiritual benefit or positive karma that is accumulated through virtuous actions, ethical conduct, and acts of generosity, wisdom, and compassion. Rejoicing in the merits of others is seen as a simple but powerful way to cultivate positive karma without directly engaging in those actions yourself.

When we sincerely rejoice in the virtues and merits of others, it helps us:

Reduce jealousy and envy.

Foster compassion and empathy.

Cultivate selflessness and a generous spirit.

Accumulate merit through the expression of joy for the goodness present in others.

Strengthen the bonds within a spiritual community or Sangha.

By developing the habit of rejoicing in the good deeds of others, one helps purify the mind, promotes spiritual growth, and supports the development of Bodhicitta, the aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

How to Practice Rejoicing in Meritorious Virtues

1. Mindfully Acknowledge Others' Virtue

Take a moment to recognize and mentally celebrate the virtuous actions, kind deeds, and accomplishments of others. This includes:

Acts of generosity, such as donating to charity or helping those in need. Kindness, compassion, and service shown toward others.

Wisdom shared through teaching or leading others on the spiritual path. Ethical behavior and moral conduct in daily life.

2. Rejoice in the Merits of the Buddha and Enlightened Beings

The Buddha and other enlightened beings have accumulated vast merits through their compassion, wisdom, and efforts to liberate all sentient beings. Rejoicing in their virtues by reflecting on their teachings, actions, and sacrifices is a powerful way to generate immense merit.

This can be done by: Reciting prayers or mantras dedicated to the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, or teachers. Meditating on the qualities of enlightened beings. Offering gratitude for the teachings and the spiritual path.

3. Rejoice in the Merits of the Sangha

The Sangha (the monastic community or fellow practitioners) plays a crucial role in preserving and spreading the Dharma. Rejoicing in their dedication, discipline, and efforts helps foster a deeper sense of respect and unity.

Ways to rejoice include: Celebrating the spiritual progress and good deeds of monastics and lay practitioners. Acknowledging the efforts of fellow practitioners who meditate, study, or engage in service to others.

4. Rejoice in the Good Deeds of Ordinary Beings

Rejoicing in the virtuous actions of ordinary beings, whether they are part of the spiritual community or not, promotes the qualities of loving-kindness and compassion. When you see acts of kindness, generosity, or moral integrity in daily life, silently express joy and admiration for the person's efforts.

5. Express Verbal Rejoicing

It is also helpful to verbally express your appreciation and happiness for others' virtuous actions. Saying things like, "I'm so happy for your generosity" or "It's wonderful that you helped someone in need" not only brings joy to the person being acknowledged but also strengthens your own virtue.

6. Rejoicing in Meditation

During meditation, you can dedicate part of your practice to rejoicing in the goodness and virtues of others. Reflect on their positive actions and qualities, and generate a sincere feeling of joy for their merit. This mental practice helps purify your mind and develop a heart of compassion and joy.

The Benefits of Rejoicing in Merits

Accumulate Merit Without Direct Action: Rejoicing allows you to accumulate merit simply by taking joy in others' actions. This helps build positive karma, even when you are not the one performing the virtuous deeds.

Develop a Positive and Generous Mindset: Constantly rejoicing in others' good deeds helps diminish negative mental states like jealousy, pride, or competitiveness. It replaces them with generosity, humility, and joy.

Purification of Negative Karma: By focusing on others' virtues and celebrating them, you purify your own negative karma, which can hinder spiritual progress.

Support the Path to Enlightenment: In the Mahayana tradition, it is believed that rejoicing in the merits of others helps you on the path to enlightenment, as it deepens your connection to Bodhicitta (the compassionate mind aiming for enlightenment for the benefit of all beings).

Rejoicing in meritorious virtues is a simple but profound practice in Buddhism that nurtures a heart of generosity, selflessness, and joy. It allows us to accumulate merit, purify our minds, and build deeper connections with others. By sincerely rejoicing in the good deeds of others, including those of the Buddha and the Sangha, we support not only our own spiritual growth but also the well-being and harmony of all sentient beings.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Okra

Okra is a nutritious and versatile vegetable that aligns well with the principles of a Buddhist diet, which emphasizes health, balance, and compassion. In many Buddhist traditions, the diet is vegetarian or vegan, with a focus on simple, whole foods that promote mindfulness and non-harming (ahimsa). Okra, with its various health benefits, fits seamlessly into this approach.

Nutritional and Health Benefits of Okra

1. Rich in Dietary Fiber

Okra is a great source of soluble and insoluble fiber, which is essential for maintaining digestive health. The high fiber content helps to regulate bowel movements, prevent constipation, and promote overall gut health. Fiber also plays a role in lowering cholesterol levels and maintaining healthy blood sugar levels, which is important for managing or preventing conditions like diabetes.

2. Low in Calories

Okra is a low-calorie food, making it ideal for those seeking a healthy diet that doesn't overload the body with excessive calories. This is in line with the Buddhist principle of moderation, which encourages consuming food mindfully and in appropriate quantities to sustain the body without overindulgence.

3. High in Antioxidants

Okra is rich in antioxidants, including flavonoids and vitamin C, which help protect the body from oxidative stress and inflammation. These antioxidants help prevent chronic diseases, support a healthy immune system, and promote skin health. This aligns with the Buddhist focus on maintaining physical and mental well-being to support spiritual practice.

4. Rich in Vitamins and Minerals

Okra is a good source of essential vitamins and minerals, including:

Vitamin C: Boosts the immune system and supports healthy skin.

Vitamin A: Supports eye health and the immune system.

Vitamin K: Important for bone health and blood clotting.

Folate: Essential for cell growth and the formation of DNA, which is especially important for pregnant women.

5. Versatility in Vegan and Vegetarian Cooking

Okra is highly versatile and can be incorporated into a wide range of vegetarian and vegan dishes. In Buddhist temple cuisine (such as shojin ryori in Japan), which focuses on seasonal, plant-based ingredients, okra can be used in soups, stir-fries, or served as a simple side dish with soy sauce and sesame oil. Its neutral flavor makes it a great addition to many recipes, enhancing the dish without overpowering other ingredients.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Okra with Cold Sauce



Ingredients:

200g fresh okra

1 tablespoon soy sauce (or tamari for a gluten-free option)

1 tablespoon rice vinegar

1 teaspoon sesame oil

1/2 teaspoon grated ginger

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon chili oil or chili flakes (optional, for a bit of heat)

1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

2–3 tablespoons cold water or ice cubes for chilling

Steps:

1. Prepare the Okra

Trim the okra: Wash the okra thoroughly and trim off the stems.

Blanch the okra: Bring a pot of water to a boil and add a pinch of salt. Blanch the okra by placing it in the boiling water for about 1–2 minutes, until it turns bright green and is tender but still slightly crisp.

Chill the okra: Immediately transfer the blanched okra to a bowl of ice water or rinse it under cold running water to stop the cooking process. This helps the okra maintain its bright color and crisp texture.

2. Prepare the Cold Sauce

Mix the sauce: In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, rice vinegar, sesame oil, grated ginger, sugar, and chili oil or chili flakes (if using). Adjust seasoning to taste.

Add cold water or ice cubes: Add 2–3 tablespoons of cold water or a few ice cubes to the sauce to chill it and make it lighter. Stir to combine.

3. Combine the Okra and Sauce

Drain the okra: Remove the chilled okra from the ice water and pat it dry with a kitchen towel or paper towel.

Coat the okra in the sauce: Arrange the okra on a serving plate and drizzle the cold sauce over it, making sure the okra is evenly coated.

4. Garnish and Serve

Garnish: Sprinkle the toasted sesame seeds.