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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Topics:

1: Dharma talk: Constantly Complying With Sentient Beings

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Winter melon

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Winter melon soup

Main content:

1: Dharma talk: Constantly Complying With Sentient Beings

Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, everyone! Constantly complying with sentient beings is a principle rooted in the Buddhist practice of compassion and service to others. It reflects the Bodhisattva path, where practitioners commit themselves to the welfare of all sentient beings, recognizing the interconnectedness of all life. In this context, "complying" doesn't mean passive acceptance but rather aligning one's actions and intentions to support, guide, and uplift others, based on their needs and capacities.

Meaning of Constantly Complying With Sentient Beings

Compassionate Service: The practice is a form of selfless compassion (*karuṇā*), where one seeks to understand the suffering, desires, and needs of others and works to alleviate their suffering. It involves responding with empathy and kindness, and offering help or guidance whenever possible, without expecting anything in return.

Understanding Diversity: Sentient beings exist in many different forms and stages of development. To "comply" with them means understanding their different karmic conditions, mental states, and capacities. It requires the wisdom to recognize that each being is on their own journey and that their needs differ. This understanding helps to tailor support in a way that is beneficial to each individual.

Practicing Non-Judgment: Constantly complying with sentient beings means accepting others without judgment. Whether people are virtuous, ignorant, or even harmful, a Bodhisattva does not reject or condemn them. Instead, they seek ways to gently guide and uplift all beings toward greater understanding and well-being.

Patience and Endurance: It takes great patience to work with all sentient beings, especially those who may resist change or understanding. In Buddhism, the Bodhisattva path involves developing *kṣānti* (patience) and *virya* (perseverance), qualities essential for dealing with the diversity of human and sentient experiences, which can sometimes be challenging.

Adapting the Teachings: As Buddha himself did, a practitioner who complies with sentient beings will adapt the Dharma (Buddhist teachings) to suit the individual. Just as the Buddha taught different people in different ways, depending on their readiness and understanding, so does this practice encourage flexibility in communication, whether through words, actions, or silent presence.

Application of Constantly Complying With Sentient Beings

Listening to Others: Complying begins with truly listening to others and understanding their circumstances. This means being present for people, understanding their struggles, and offering help in ways that are sensitive and respectful of their needs and situation.

Offering Help Without Attachment: When complying with sentient beings, the help offered is without attachment to the outcome. Whether or not the other person takes the advice, or benefits in the way one intends, is not the focus. The focus is on the sincere offering of assistance.

Encouraging Growth Without Force: Some sentient beings may not be ready to receive deeper teachings or make significant changes in their lives. In these cases, constantly complying means planting seeds of Dharma—small, gentle steps that encourage future growth without forcing change. This aligns with the Buddhist view of upaya (skillful means), where different methods are used to guide beings according to their level of understanding.

Respecting Free Will: Part of compliance means recognizing and respecting the free will of others. Even though a practitioner may wish to guide someone toward wisdom or enlightenment, it's essential to respect their choices and timing. Forcing someone into change can cause resistance; instead, a Bodhisattva waits for the right moment to offer guidance.

Fostering Empathy in Daily Interactions: Whether in family, work, or social environments, complying with sentient beings means showing patience, compassion, and empathy in every interaction. A simple act of kindness or a word of understanding can have a profound impact on someone's path.

Constantly complying with sentient beings represents a deep commitment to compassion and service, grounded in the understanding that all beings are interconnected. It encourages practitioners to act with patience, flexibility, and non-judgment, adapting their approach to suit the needs of others. This practice is key to the Bodhisattva path, where the welfare and enlightenment of all beings is the ultimate goal. By embodying this principle, practitioners develop both wisdom and compassion, working for the benefit of all sentient beings while walking the path toward enlightenment.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Winter melon

Winter melon is a highly valued vegetable in the Buddhist diet, known for its cooling properties and rich health benefits. It is commonly used in Asian cooking, particularly in soups and stews, and is well-aligned with the principles of balance, simplicity, and health that are central to a Buddhist diet.

Nutritional and Health Benefits of Winter Melon. Winter melon is known in traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda for its cooling effect on the body. It helps reduce internal heat, making it a perfect food for warm climates or during the summer months. Being 90% water, it is extremely hydrating and helps maintain fluid balance in the body.

Rich in Vitamins and Minerals:

Winter melon contains a variety of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, B-vitamins, calcium, and potassium. These contribute to immune support, healthy skin, nerve function, and maintaining balanced electrolytes.

Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant, supporting the immune system and protecting the body from oxidative stress.

The Buddhist diet emphasizes simple, wholesome, and plant-based foods that nourish the body without causing harm to living beings. Winter melon fits perfectly into this framework, offering a nutritious option that is easy to prepare and versatile.

Its mild, almost neutral flavor allows it to be used in a variety of dishes while providing nourishment without overstimulating the senses, in line with the Buddhist approach to food as a tool for sustaining the body.

Winter melon is a versatile vegetable in Buddhist vegetarian and vegan cuisines. It is commonly used in soups, stir-fries, stews, and even in desserts in some Asian cultures.

Its texture and mild flavor make it a suitable ingredient in savory dishes like soups, where it absorbs the flavors of other ingredients, while providing a refreshing, hydrating element.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Winter melon soup



Ingredients:

500g winter melon (peeled, seeds removed, and cut into cubes)
6-8 dried shiitake mushrooms (soaked in water until softened, then sliced)
1 block firm tofu (cut into cubes)
4-5 cups vegetable broth (or water)
1 thumb-sized piece of ginger (sliced thinly)
1 tablespoon soy sauce (optional)
1 teaspoon sesame oil
Fresh cilantro (optional, for garnish)
Salt and pepper to taste

Steps:

1. Prepare the Ingredients

Winter Melon: Peel the winter melon, remove the seeds, and cut it into bite-sized cubes.

Mushrooms: Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms in warm water until they soften (about 20 minutes). Slice them thinly after soaking. Save the soaking water to use in the soup for extra flavor.

2. Cook the Soup

Sauté Aromatics: In a large pot, heat the sesame oil over medium heat. Add the minced sliced ginger, and sauté until fragrant (about 1-2 minutes).

Add Mushrooms: Add the soaked shiitake mushrooms to the pot and stir-fry for a couple of minutes to release their flavor.

Add Liquid: Pour in the vegetable broth (or water) and add the mushroom soaking water for extra umami flavor. Bring the soup to a gentle boil.

Simmer the Winter Melon: Add the cubed winter melon to the pot. Reduce the heat to low and let the soup simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the winter melon becomes translucent and tender.

3. Season and Serve

Season: Add soy sauce, salt, and pepper to taste. Adjust the seasoning according to your preference.