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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Topics:

1: Dharma talk: The Principle of Causality in Buddhism

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Main content:

1: Dharma talk: The Principle of Causality in Buddhism

Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, everyone! The principle of causality in Buddhism, often referred to as dependent origination, is a fundamental teaching that explains how all phenomena arise and cease based on causes and conditions. It emphasizes the interconnectedness and impermanence of all things, rejecting the idea of an independent or permanent self or entities. Everything is seen as part of a web of causes and effects, constantly influencing and being influenced by each other.

Key Aspects of the Principle of Causality

1. Dependent Origination

Dependent origination states that nothing exists independently; everything arises due to a combination of causes and conditions. The famous twelve links (Nidānas) of dependent origination illustrate how suffering (dukkha) comes into existence through a chain of causation. This chain can be summarized as follows:

Ignorance gives rise to mental formations,
Mental formations give rise to consciousness
Consciousness gives rise to name and form,
Name and form give rise to the six sense bases,
The six sense bases give rise to contact ,
Contact gives rise to feeling,
Feeling gives rise to craving,
Craving gives rise to clinging,
Clinging gives rise to becoming (Bhava),
Becoming gives rise to birth,
Birth gives rise to aging and death, which leads to suffering.

This cycle illustrates how ignorance and desire fuel the cycle of birth and rebirth (samsara), perpetuating suffering. By understanding and breaking the links in this chain, particularly ignorance and craving, one can achieve liberation (nirvana).

2. Karma (Action and Effect)

The principle of causality also operates through karma, which refers to intentional actions of body, speech, and mind. Karma is driven by intention, and it produces corresponding results (vipāka). Positive actions motivated by compassion, generosity, and wisdom generate positive karmic outcomes, while negative actions fueled by greed, hatred, and delusion result in suffering.

Karma functions as a moral law of cause and effect, but it is not deterministic. Instead, it emphasizes personal responsibility: while the effects of past actions shape present circumstances, how one responds

in the present can influence future outcomes. This encourages mindfulness and ethical behavior, as every action carries consequences.

3. Impermanence (Anicca)

The principle of causality reinforces the concept of impermanence, which states that all conditioned phenomena are in a constant state of change. Since everything arises due to causes and conditions, nothing is static or eternal. This understanding helps practitioners develop non-attachment and realize that clinging to impermanent things leads to suffering.

4. No-Self (Anatta)

Causality in Buddhism also challenges the concept of an eternal self (atman). The doctrine of anatta (non-self) teaches that the idea of a permanent, independent "self" is an illusion. Instead, what we consider a "self" is a collection of five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness) that are constantly changing due to causes and conditions. This insight leads to the realization that there is no fixed "I" or "me" to cling to, aiding the cessation of suffering.

The principle of causality in Buddhism is a profound teaching that underpins the path to liberation. By understanding the way causes and conditions give rise to experiences and suffering, practitioners can cultivate wisdom, mindfulness, and ethical conduct, gradually freeing themselves from the cycle of samsara. It's a teaching that encourages taking responsibility for one's life while also recognizing the vast, interconnected web of existence.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Peanuts

In the context of a Buddhist diet, peanuts symbolize abundance and simplicity. They are affordable, easy to grow, and highly nutritious, making them a popular food for both monastics and lay practitioners. In many Buddhist cultures, peanuts are considered a "pure" food that supports the principles of ahimsa (non-harming) due to their plant-based nature.

Health Benefits of Peanuts

Peanuts are a valuable component of the Buddhist diet, particularly in plant-based or vegetarian practices, due to their rich nutritional profile. Though often mistaken for nuts, peanuts are legumes and provide several key health benefits:

High in Protein: Peanuts are an excellent source of plant-based protein, making them a staple for those following a vegetarian or vegan diet. A single serving provides essential amino acids that support muscle repair and overall bodily functions.

Heart Health: Peanuts are rich in monounsaturated fats, which help reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) levels and promote cardiovascular health. They also contain resveratrol, an antioxidant associated with heart health.

Rich in Vitamins and Minerals: Peanuts are a great source of vitamin E, an antioxidant that supports skin health and immune function, and B vitamins like niacin and folate, which are essential for energy metabolism and brain health.

High in Fiber: The dietary fiber in peanuts supports healthy digestion and helps in maintaining steady blood sugar levels, making them an ideal food for balancing energy throughout the day.

Antioxidant-Rich: Peanuts contain several antioxidants, including resveratrol and polyphenols, which help protect the body against oxidative stress and inflammation, promoting longevity and overall wellness.

Peanuts also play a role in various offerings and festivals, where they are used in dishes to honor ancestors or during temple celebrations. Their association with good health and longevity makes them a symbol of nourishment and vitality in Buddhist traditions.

By incorporating peanuts into a balanced diet, practitioners not only nourish their bodies but also align with the core values of mindfulness, simplicity, and compassion that are central to Buddhist teachings.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Celery salad with peanuts



Ingredients:

- 4-5 celery stalks, thinly sliced
- ½ cup roasted peanuts (unsalted)
- 1 small carrot, julienned (optional for color)
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp soy sauce (or tamari for gluten-free)
- 1 tsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp ginger, finely grated
- 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds (optional, for garnish)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Steps:

1. Prep the Vegetables:

Cut the celery and carrots into small pieces Place in a large mixing bowl.

2. Make the Dressing:

In a small bowl, whisk together the sesame oil, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sugar (if using), and ginger.

3. Combine the Salad:

Pour the dressing over the celery and carrots. Toss to coat evenly.

4. Add the Peanuts:

Just before serving, add the roasted peanuts to the salad and toss lightly to combine. This ensures the peanuts retain their crunch.

5. Season and Garnish:

Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if necessary.

6. Serve:

Serve immediately as a side dish or a light meal. This salad pairs well with rice or as a refreshing addition to any meal.