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1: Dharma Talk: Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha

Hello everyone! Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, I am Hao Liu! Today, I would like to share the Dharma Talk topic: Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha. Lumbini, a serene and sacred land in present-day Nepal, is where Prince Siddhartha Gautama, later known as Sakyamuni Buddha, was born in 563 BCE. This holy site has been revered for over two millennia, attracting pilgrims and spiritual seekers from around the world.

According to Buddhist tradition, Queen Maya Devi, the wife of King Śuddhodana of the Śākya clan, was traveling from Kapilavastu to her parental home in Devadaha. As she passed through the lush gardens of Lumbini, she felt labor pains and grasped the branch of a sal tree. Under its shade, she gave birth to a divine child—Siddhartha Gautama.

Legends say that as soon as he was born, the infant Buddha took seven steps, and at each step, a lotus flower bloomed. He then proclaimed: “I am the foremost in the world, this is my last birth.” After his birth, Queen Maya Devi bathed in the Puskarini Sacred Pond, a site that remains a key part of Lumbini’s pilgrimage tradition.

Lumbini’s sacredness was recognized early in history, and it became an important site for Buddhist pilgrimage. Emperor Ashoka the Great, a devout follower of Buddhism, visited Lumbini in 249 BCE and erected the famous Ashoka Pillar to commemorate the Buddha’s birthplace. The inscription on the pillar reads: “Here, the Buddha, sage of the Śākya clan, was born.”

A pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, is a deeply spiritual journey for Buddhists and seekers of peace worldwide. Visiting Lumbini is an act of devotion, allowing pilgrims to meditate, offer prayers, and reflect on the Dharma at the very place where the Buddha took his first steps.

Now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Lumbini is a center for pilgrimage, meditation, and study. It houses:

1. Maya Devi Temple

This temple marks the exact spot where Queen Maya Devi gave birth to Prince Siddhartha Gautama in 563 BCE. Inside, a sacred stone marks the birthplace, and archaeological remains dating back to 3rd century BCE provide evidence of its ancient reverence.

2. Ashoka Pillar

Built by Emperor Ashoka the Great in 249 BCE, this stone pillar bears an inscription confirming Lumbini as the birthplace of the Buddha. It is one of the oldest Buddhist relics, affirming Lumbini's historical authenticity.

3. Puskarini Sacred Pond

This is the pond where Queen Maya Devi bathed before giving birth and where the newborn Buddha received his first purification. Pilgrims often offer flowers and meditate beside its serene waters.

A pilgrimage to Lumbini is more than just visiting a historical site—it is a spiritual transformation. By walking in the footsteps of the Buddha, pilgrims reaffirm their commitment to wisdom, compassion, and inner peace.

Lumbini is more than a historical site—it is a symbol of peace, wisdom, and enlightenment. It reminds us of the Buddha's journey from prince to awakened teacher and his teachings on compassion, non-attachment, and the path to liberation.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Hor Fun

Hor Fun, or flat rice noodles, is a staple in many Asian cuisines, including Buddhist vegetarian diets. As a versatile, plant-based ingredient, it offers nutritional benefits, easy digestibility, and culinary adaptability while aligning with the principles of a Buddhist diet—which emphasizes balance, simplicity, and mindful eating.

Nutritional Benefits of Hor Fun:

1. Gluten-Free & Easy to Digest

Made from rice flour and water, Hor Fun is naturally gluten-free, making it suitable for those with gluten sensitivities or celiac disease.

Its soft texture is easy on the stomach, making it an excellent choice for people with digestive concerns.

2. Good Source of Carbohydrates

Provides energy from complex carbohydrates, which support sustained stamina, particularly for those engaged in meditation or mindful practices.

Low in fat and cholesterol-free, it fits well within a Buddhist sattvic (pure) diet, which avoids overly stimulating or heavy foods.

3. Hydrating & Cooling Properties

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), rice-based foods like Hor Fun are believed to have a cooling effect on the body, helping to balance internal heat.

Traditionally, Buddhist monks and practitioners follow a vegetarian diet, avoiding harm to sentient beings. Hor Fun pairs well with plant-based proteins like tofu, mushrooms, and nuts, making it a nutritious choice. Hor Fun, when prepared with wholesome, plant-based ingredients, aligns beautifully with the Buddhist philosophy of mindful and compassionate eating. Whether stir-fried or in a light broth, it provides sustained energy, digestive comfort, and culinary satisfaction—all while supporting a peaceful and ethical way of life.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Stir Fry Hor Fun



Ingredients:

For the noodles:

300g fresh Hor Fun (flat rice noodles)

2 tbsp vegetable oil (sesame oil or peanut oil for extra aroma)

1 cup mixed vegetables (e.g., bell peppers, carrots, baby corn, snow peas)

1 cup mushrooms (shiitake, oyster, or king oyster, sliced)

½ cup firm tofu (cubed and lightly pan-fried)
1 tsp grated ginger
1 small red chili (optional, for heat)
2 tbsp water or vegetable broth

For the sauce:

2 tbsp light soy sauce (or tamari for gluten-free)
1 tbsp dark soy sauce (for color and depth)
1 tbsp mushroom sauce
½ tsp white pepper
½ tsp sugar
1 tsp cornstarch, mixed with 2 tbsp water (for a light glaze)

Steps:

1. Prepare the noodles:

If using fresh Hor Fun, gently separate the strands.

If using dried rice noodles, soak them in warm water until soft, then drain.

2. Make the sauce:

In a small bowl, mix light soy sauce, dark soy sauce, white pepper, sugar, and cornstarch slurry. Set aside.

3. Heat the wok:

Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a wok or large pan over medium-high heat.

Add ginger and stir-fry until fragrant.

4. Stir-fry the vegetables and tofu:

Add mushrooms, mixed vegetables, and chili (if using). Stir-fry for about 2 minutes.

Add tofu and a splash of vegetable broth to prevent sticking. Stir-fry for another 2 minutes.

5. Cook the noodles:

Push the vegetables to one side of the wok. Add 1 tbsp of oil, then toss in the Hor Fun noodles.

Let them sear for about 30 seconds before stirring to get that wok hei (charred aroma).

6. Combine everything:

Pour the sauce mixture over the noodles and toss everything together.

Stir-fry for another 2 minutes until well-coated and glossy.

7. Serve hot:

Transfer to a plate and garnish with sesame seeds.