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Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: The Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha Chapter 4 - Turning the Dharma Wheel

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1: Dharma Talk: The Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha Chapter 4 - Turning the Dharma Wheel

Hello everyone! Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, I am Hao Liu! Today, I would like to share the Dharma Talk topic: The Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha Chapter 4 - Turning the Dharma Wheel.

The Buddha walked with kindness and compassion toward the city of Kasi. Along the way he encountered a spiritual seeker named Upaka. When Upaka first set eyes upon the Buddha's magnificent appearance, a sense of reverence welled up in his mind. In a gesture of respect toward the Buddha, he stepped to the side of the road as the Buddha passed, kneeled, and asked, "Who are you? Why do you possess such auspicious characteristics? We all have minds as disorderly as wild monkeys, unable to concentrate for even a moment. All day long they are bound by desire, and have no freedom at all. But I look upon your compassionate expression and see that you are free of worldly defilements. When of still waters: I cannot help but be overjoyed to stand before a man who possesses such rare and noble characteristics. Do you belong to a sect of renunciants? Who is your teacher? My name is Upaka, please answer my humble questions." Resting his eyes on Upaka for a moment, the Buddha spoke gently to him, "Upaka, my sect has no lineage, nor do I have companions or friends on the path, for I attained enlightenment and learned the Dharma on my own. What others do not realize, I now realize. What others have not awakened to, I am now awakened to. What others do not know, I now know, for I have attained perfect enlightenment.

"Affliction is a frightening enemy, but I have conquered it with the sword of wisdom. Right now, I am going toward the city of Kasi. Along the way I shall beat the Dharma drum of perfect enlightenment and wisdom to awaken all beings who slumber in ignorance. "Upaka, I have no more arrogance. I am not a slave to fame, nor a servant to benefit. My only aim is to teach the true Dharma to liberate all beings wallowing in the sea of suffering. In the past, that was my vow, and now I am ready to undertake the task, so that those with good roots and karmic connections may be liberated. "To hoard wealth and enjoy prosperity on one's own is not befitting of a righteous individual. One who takes his wealth and shares it with the world is the true hero. If one forgets others after gaining benefit for oneself, who

could call him a good person? Distance yourself from thoughts of benefit and advantage, striving instead to liberate beings who are suffering. Then you can be called courageous. I have become a great doctor, able to cure the diseases which plague the minds of beings. I am awake, and can clearly see the past, present, and future. I am able to guide confused beings down the path to enlightenment.

"Upaka, do not reprimand me for speaking without humbleness or politeness, for humbleness and politeness may hide hypocrisy and deceit. What I have said to you is true and sincere, for my words correspond with reality. "A lamp does not decide to shine because it is dark. A lamp repels the darkness because it is its nature to do so. I am now a Buddha-I have nothing to ask of this world, I merely light the lamp of wisdom in accordance with my nature, dispelling the darkness of ignorance that shrouds all beings. When there is friction between wood, there is fire. When the air moves, there is wind. When one bores into the earth, there is water, all this is so according to the nature of things. "Upaka, I have become the Buddha of this world, and will now head to Deer Park to turn the Dharma wheel and deliver this world's first Dharma talk:' After quietly listening to the Buddha's words, Upaka praised the Buddha and promised that he would someday become a disciple. Afterwards, the two parted ways.

The Buddha continued on his way, eventually arriving at Deer Park. Deer Park was nestled between the Ganges and Varanasi Rivers, the forest flourished and the animals were tame. This was a place of solitude and elegance. A group of ascetics resided within Deer Park, and within the group were the Buddha's former attendants, Ajanata Kaundinya and the four others, who diligently performed ascetic practices. As the Buddha drew near, Ajanata Kaundinya and the others saw him approaching. "Is that not Prince Siddhartha?" Ajanata Kaundinya, who was preparing to meditate, asked Asvajit and his other companions. "Let us pay him no heed. He has abandoned his ascetic practices and indulged in worldly pleasures. He has fallen. When he comes near, let us not greet him:'

"He is probably filled with regret. Unless he has come to seek forgiveness, he truly knows no shame:' "It must be because he is lonely, and has come here to seek our companionship. Yes, let us not greet him. We should treat him as we would other visitors. Let us not rise from our seats, or inquire about his journey:' And so the five made this promise before shutting their eyes tightly, pretending to be immersed in meditation. However, when the Buddha approached them, they soon forgot their promise. Though they did not wish to see the Buddha, they unconsciously opened their eyes to gaze upon him as he approached. When they saw him, they were surprised. How had he become so majestic after a mere month apart? They beseeched the Buddha to take the seat of honor amongst them and bowed to him, touching their foreheads to the ground. "When you saw me approaching, did you not resolve amongst yourselves not to greet me? Why do you now stand and receive me. ?"

Facing these five men, the Buddha was like a luminous mirror, illuminating their hearts. The five of them felt awed and ashamed. "Siddhartha, we would not dare do so;" one answered sincerely as he knelt on the ground. "Are you weary from your journey?"

"Do not call me Siddhartha any longer, for that was my worldly name. I have become a Buddha, the light of the world. I am a raft in the midst of the sea of suffering. I am now the father and mother of all beings:" "When did you become a Buddha?" asked Ajnata Kaundinya, "Even when you immersed yourself in ascetic practices, you did not become a Buddha. How have you attained enlightenment after renouncing your practice?" "Ajanata Kaundinya, beings like you who cling to one extreme of practice will never attain perfect enlightenment, but instead inflict pain upon the body and cause unrest in the mind. On the other hand, immersing the mind and body in pleasures easily causes the growth of desires. Practice which favors either pain or pleasure will never lead to the great path. I knew this even when I first left the royal palace. Nonetheless, I practiced six years of austerities with you five. Only by casting aside both pleasure and pain can one walk the middle way. If you aspire to enter the gates of liberation, you must practice right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditative concentration. Only by practicing this Noble Eightfold Path will one become liberated from the suffering that plagues all sentient beings, dispel ignorance, and attain a state of purity and tranquility:" Upon hearing the Buddha's teachings on the sublime truth of practice, the minds of Ajanata Kaundinya and the others were illuminated, and their hearts filled with both admiration and joy. Sensing that these men were beginning to grasp the truth, the Buddha continued, "Ajanata Kaundinya, do you know why we practice? It is to cast aside suffering. The world is full of suffering: natural disasters of wind, water, and earth, as well as all manner of dissatisfaction and unattainable goals that disturb our peace, in addition to aging, illness, and death which strike down the body and mind. Is this world not filled with suffering?

"Know that 'suffering' is all caused by the self. Beings become attached to the idea of the self, and from the self arises greed, anger, and ignorance, this is the 'accumulation' of suffering. If you wish to be free of suffering, you must practice the 'path.' Only by practicing can one know the 'cessation' of suffering, the state of tranquility." Upon hearing the Buddha teach the Dharma, the five men felt like they had never heard anything like it. They became convinced that the Buddha had realized the truth. The Buddha continued,

"Ajanata Kaundinya, hear my words: there is suffering, which is oppressive; there is the cause of suffering, which beckons; there is the cessation of suffering, which is attainable; and there is the path, which can be practiced. Remember well: suffering should be understood, the cause of suffering should be ended, the cessation of suffering should be realized, and the path should be practiced. For I have understood suffering, I have ended the cause of suffering, I have realized the cessation of suffering, and I have practiced the path.

"Suffering, the causes of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering: these are the Four Noble Truths. If you do not fully understand these four truths then liberation is not possible. Do you understand my teaching?" Humbled, Ajanata Kaundinya and the others replied truthfully, "We now know that you have achieved the three kinds of enlightenment,²⁹ perfected all virtues, and are a Buddha. Buddha, we understand your teaching." Once expanded on, the Four Noble Truths taught to Ajanata Kaundinya and his four companions are what we now know as Buddhism.

The Buddha was born into this world for the one great purpose of liberating all beings. Therefore he did not stop after he attained enlightenment for himself. The Buddha saw that Ajanata Kaundinya and the others were capable of understanding the truths he learned from his enlightenment. These five men followed the Buddha's teaching, and were able to attain levels of enlightenment themselves. The Buddha wished to test these five to see if they truly understood the truths he had spoken. The Buddha asked, "Ajanata Kaundinya, tell me, are the five aggregates³⁰ of form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness permanent? Are they impermanent? Are they suffering? Are they not suffering? Are they empty? Are they not empty? Are they not the self? Are they self?" "Buddha, form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness are impermanent, lead to suffering, are empty in nature, and are non-self. We completely understand these points. We all wish to seek refuge in the Buddha and become your disciples." "Excellent. You are now capable of achieving liberation, being freed from myriad suffering. You shall become known as my disciples, the bhiksus. ³¹ Together we will become the foremost field of merit in the world. I, the teacher, the Four Noble Truths, the teaching, and you five, the monastic community, have now been gathered together. These shall become known as the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Together they shall spread the Buddha's teaching across the world, guide all beings onto the brilliant great path, and allow them to attain liberation." After hearing the Buddha's words, the five bhiksus Ajanata Kaundinya, Asvajit, Bhadrika, Dasabala Kasyapa, and Mahanama Kulika, were filled with joy and enthusiasm. They faithfully accepted and upheld the teachings, following the Buddha to benefit themselves and others.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Purple Cabbage

Purple cabbage, also known as red cabbage, is an excellent addition to a Buddhist diet for its nutritional benefits and vibrant color. Like many vegetables embraced in Buddhist cuisine, purple cabbage offers a balance of simplicity, nutrition, and healing properties, aligning with the Buddhist principles of non-harm (ahimsa) and mindfulness in eating.

Health Benefits of Purple Cabbage in a Buddhist Diet
Rich in Antioxidants:

Purple cabbage contains anthocyanins, the same antioxidants found in blueberries and other purple fruits. These antioxidants are known to help reduce oxidative stress in the body, which can prevent chronic diseases and slow the aging process.

In a Buddhist context, eating foods rich in antioxidants supports mental clarity and well-being. Since the Buddhist diet emphasizes maintaining a calm and clear mind, foods like purple cabbage can contribute to emotional and spiritual balance.

Supports Digestion:

Purple cabbage is an excellent source of dietary fiber, which aids in digestion, helps maintain regular bowel movements, and supports a healthy gut microbiome. The digestive system is crucial to overall health, and keeping it in balance can enhance one's energy levels and well-being.

In Buddhist traditions, digestion is considered key to overall vitality. Eating fiber-rich foods like purple cabbage supports holistic health, which is fundamental to Buddhist teachings on maintaining harmony between body and mind.

Rich in Vitamins and Minerals:

Vitamin C: Purple cabbage is a great source of Vitamin C, an essential nutrient that supports immune function, collagen production, and healthy skin. For Buddhists, keeping the body strong and resilient to illness is part of maintaining physical health in service to spiritual practice.

Vitamin K: This vitamin plays a key role in blood clotting and bone health. It's also important for preventing inflammation, which is in line with Buddhist principles of avoiding excess and maintaining internal balance.

Potassium: The high potassium content in purple cabbage helps regulate blood pressure and supports heart health, which is vital for a long and healthy life, especially when focusing on mindfulness practices and meditation.

Anti-Inflammatory:

Like other cruciferous vegetables, purple cabbage contains anti-inflammatory compounds, including sulforaphane and indole-3-carbinol. These compounds help reduce inflammation in the body, which can prevent diseases and promote overall wellness.

Reducing inflammation also aligns with the Buddhist goal of reducing suffering (dukkha), as chronic inflammation can contribute to discomfort and illness.

Promotes Detoxification:

Purple cabbage supports the body's natural detox processes due to its high water content and fiber. The fiber helps remove toxins through the digestive system, and its sulfur-containing compounds support liver detoxification.

In the Buddhist diet, detoxification is not just physical but also mental. Mindfulness of food choices encourages the purification of the body and mind, aligning with spiritual practices of clarity and inner peace.

Low in Calories, High in Satiety:

Purple cabbage is low in calories but high in volume and fiber, making it a filling food that helps control appetite and maintain a healthy weight. Since Buddhist dietary practices emphasize moderation (in both food and action), purple cabbage fits well into a mindful approach to eating.

A lighter diet that includes fiber-rich foods like cabbage can also support mental clarity, which is important for meditation and other contemplative practices.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Cold Peanuts and Purple Cabbage



Ingredients:

2 cups purple cabbage, shredded

1/2 cup roasted peanuts, unsalted (or salted, depending on preference)

1 medium carrot, julienned (optional for extra color and crunch)

1 small cucumber, thinly sliced (optional for added freshness)

For the Dressing:

1 1/2 tbsp rice vinegar (or apple cider vinegar for a tangier taste)

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

1 tsp sesame oil (for depth and fragrance)

1 tsp honey (or maple syrup for vegan option)

1/2 tsp grated ginger (fresh or powdered)

1/4 tsp chili flakes (optional, for a touch of heat)

1 tsp toasted sesame seeds (optional, for extra crunch and flavor)

Steps:

1. Prepare the Vegetables:

Shred the purple cabbage into thin strips or use a mandoline slicer to get even pieces.

If you're using carrot and cucumber, julienne the carrot and slice the cucumber thinly.

2. Toast the Peanuts (if not using pre-roasted):

If you want extra crunch and flavor, toast raw peanuts in a dry skillet over medium heat for about 5–7 minutes, shaking occasionally. Keep an eye on them so they don't burn. Once toasted, roughly chop them.

3. Make the Dressing:

In a small bowl, whisk together the rice vinegar, soy sauce, sesame oil, honey, grated ginger, and chili flakes (if using). Taste and adjust the balance if needed – add more honey if you prefer it sweeter, or more vinegar for extra tang.

4. Assemble the Salad:

In a large mixing bowl, combine the shredded purple cabbage, carrots, cucumber, and roasted peanuts. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss everything together to coat evenly.

5. Serve:

Garnish with toasted sesame seeds for an extra touch of flavor and crunch.

Serve immediately or refrigerate for 10–15 minutes before serving for a chilled option.