

Date: 06/21/2025 06/22/2025

Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

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Topics:

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1: Dharma Talk: Bodhidharma's Teachings and Chan Meditation

Hello everyone! Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, I am Hao Liu! Today, I would like to share the Dharma Talk topic: Bodhidharma's Teachings and Chan Meditation.

At the heart of Bodhidharma's message is the practice of dhyāna (meditation) and the realization of emptiness. He is said to have transmitted the practice of meditation to his disciples, urging them to meditate deeply in order to directly experience awakening. In contrast to earlier forms of Buddhism, which placed a heavy emphasis on scriptural study, rituals, and doctrinal debate, Bodhidharma's approach was radically non-conceptual—focusing solely on direct experience and mind-to-mind transmission.

Bodhidharma is often depicted as someone who transmitted the Buddha's teachings directly, without relying on scriptures. He is said to have transmitted the teachings through silent meditation rather than through oral teachings, arguing that the essence of Buddha's wisdom is beyond words and concepts. This approach formed the basis for Chan (and later Zen) practice, which places a strong emphasis on non-verbal transmission of insight.

One of the central tenets of Chan Buddhism is the idea of "no-thought" or "mindless" meditation, in which practitioners sit in silent meditation to realize the nature of their own minds. Bodhidharma's teachings are said to have emphasized that true understanding could only be attained by sitting in deep meditation, without attachment to concepts, ideas, or images.

Bodhidharma is often credited with having an association with the Shaolin Temple, one of the most famous temples in China. According to legend, Bodhidharma spent nine years meditating in a cave near the Shaolin Temple, facing a wall in silent contemplation. During this period, he is said to have gazed at the wall for nine years, which symbolizes the deep, undistracted meditation that is characteristic of Chan practice.

One well-known story is that Bodhidharma is said to have introduced physical exercises to the Shaolin monks, a practice which eventually led to the development of Shaolin kung fu. While the historical

accuracy of this story is debated, it reflects an important aspect of Bodhidharma's influence: the integration of body and mind in meditation. This connection between physical discipline (martial arts) and meditation later became a key feature of Chan (Zen) practice in both China and Japan.

Bodhidharma's teachings were passed down through Bodhidharma's disciples, especially to Huike, his second patriarch. It is Huike who is credited with being the first to fully understand Bodhidharma's teachings on meditation and enlightenment, and the lineage of Chan began to take form through the succession of patriarchs.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Baby Corn

Baby Corn is a versatile and nutritious vegetable that fits beautifully into a Buddhist diet, aligning with its principles of health, moderation, and compassion for all living beings. Baby corn is harvested early from the same plant that produces mature corn, making it smaller, more tender, and slightly sweeter than its fully-grown counterpart.

Health Benefits of Baby Corn in a Buddhist Diet

1. Low in Calories, High in Nutrients

Baby corn is low in calories but rich in essential nutrients, making it an excellent food choice for those following a vegetarian or plant-based Buddhist diet. Its low calorie content supports moderation and balance in Buddhist eating, allowing practitioners to nourish their bodies without excess.

Vitamins: Baby corn is an excellent source of vitamin A, which supports eye health, and vitamin C, which boosts the immune system and supports skin health.

Minerals: It provides important minerals such as iron, magnesium, and potassium, all of which help maintain heart health, regulate blood pressure, and support muscle function.

2. Rich in Fiber for Digestive Health

Fiber is essential for maintaining healthy digestion, and baby corn is a good source of dietary fiber. Regular consumption of fiber-rich vegetables supports regular bowel movements, helps prevent constipation, and contributes to the overall health of the digestive system.

In a Buddhist diet, fiber-rich foods are often emphasized because they contribute to the idea of maintaining a clean body and fostering inner harmony. The act of mindfully eating fibrous foods like baby corn encourages a connection to one's physical state and supports digestion as an important part of holistic health.

3. Supports Heart Health

Baby corn contains potassium, a mineral that is important for heart health. Potassium helps regulate blood pressure by balancing the negative effects of sodium in the diet. By keeping blood pressure at healthy levels, it reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, making baby corn an excellent choice for promoting long-term health.

4. Helps Maintain Blood Sugar Levels

Baby corn is a good source of complex carbohydrates, which are digested more slowly, providing a steady release of energy. This makes it an excellent food for maintaining stable blood sugar levels and preventing spikes in blood glucose, which is beneficial for overall health and energy.

For those following a vegetarian or vegan Buddhist diet, it's important to ensure that meals provide steady and consistent energy throughout the day, and baby corn is a wonderful addition to achieve that balance.

5. Boosts Immune Function

The vitamin C content in baby corn plays a key role in supporting a healthy immune system. It helps the body fight off infections, heal wounds, and support overall health. In a Buddhist context, maintaining a strong immune system contributes to mind-body harmony, allowing practitioners to live their lives with vitality and clarity.

6. Promotes Hydration

Baby corn has a high water content, making it a hydrating vegetable that helps maintain the body's fluid balance. Adequate hydration is crucial for the body's detoxification process, and in Buddhist practice, this supports the idea of maintaining a clean and clear body to help with meditation and mindfulness.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Fried Snow Peas with Baby Corn



Ingredients:

- 1 cup snow peas, trimmed
- 1 cup baby corn (fresh or canned)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (or sesame oil for added flavor)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce (or tamari for gluten-free)
- 1 teaspoon ginger, minced (optional, for extra flavor)
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce (optional, for more depth of flavor)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- A pinch of sesame seeds (optional, for garnish)
- Chili flakes (optional, for a little heat)

Steps:

1. Prepare the Ingredients:

Trim the ends of the snow peas and remove the strings if necessary. Rinse them well.

If using canned baby corn, drain and rinse. If using fresh baby corn, slice them into halves or thirds depending on their size.

2. Heat the Pan:

Heat a large wok or skillet over medium-high heat. Add the vegetable oil (or sesame oil) and allow it to heat up. You want the oil hot but not smoking.

3. Stir-Fry the Aromatics:

Add the ginger to the pan. Stir-fry for about 30 seconds until fragrant

4. Cook the Baby Corn:

Add the baby corn to the pan. Stir-fry for about 2-3 minutes, allowing it to warm through and get slightly golden on the edges.

5. Add the Snow Peas:

Add the snow peas to the pan and stir everything together. Continue to cook for another 2-3 minutes, just until the snow peas are tender but still crisp.

6. Season the Dish:

Add the soy sauce and oyster sauce (if using) to the pan. Stir to coat the vegetables evenly with the sauce. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.

If you want a bit of heat, sprinkle some chili flakes into the mix.

7. Serve:

Once the vegetables are tender and coated with the sauce, transfer the dish to a serving platter.

Optionally, sprinkle with sesame seeds for garnish.