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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

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Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: The Flower Sermon - A CHAN Story of Direct Transmission

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Cowpea

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Fried Eggplant and Cowpea

Main content:

1: Dharma Talk: The Flower Sermon - A CHAN Story of Direct Transmission

Hello everyone! Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, I am Hao Liu! Today, I would like to share the Dharma Talk topic: The Flower Sermon - A CHAN Story of Direct Transmission.

It was a warm morning, and a gathering of the Buddha's disciples sat quietly before him, waiting for his words of wisdom, as they always did. The sun shone through the leaves of the trees, casting gentle shadows upon the earth. The air was still, the world outside peaceful and serene.

But today was different.

Rather than speaking, the Buddha remained silent. He reached down and picked a single flower—a lotus, delicate and radiant with the morning light. He held it up before the assembly, and for a moment, the world seemed to pause.

The disciples gazed intently at the flower, each searching for meaning. Some strained their minds, trying to figure out what the Buddha's gesture meant. Others looked at one another, waiting for someone to speak. But still, the Buddha did not utter a word. He simply held the flower in his hands, his face calm and serene.

Most of the disciples were perplexed, unsure of how to respond. But in the crowd, one man—a monk named Mahākāśyapa—looked at the flower, and something stirred deep within him. He didn't need to think, didn't need to analyze. He saw the flower, and in that instant, he smiled. It wasn't a smile of knowing, of intellectual understanding, but a smile that came from a deep, intuitive realization.

The Buddha, seeing Mahākāśyapa's smile, nodded in acknowledgment.

And then, in his silence, the Buddha spoke to the assembly in the most profound way:

"I possess the true Dharma eye, the marvelous mind of Nirvana, the true form of the formless, the subtle Dharma gate, not dependent on words or letters. This I now entrust to Mahākāśyapa."

It was a simple, yet profound transmission. The Buddha did not explain. He did not teach through concepts or ideas. Instead, he pointed directly to the truth of the universe in the most direct and non-verbal way possible—through a flower. Through the silent smile of one who understood, not through logic, but through direct experience.

This moment became the foundation of CHAN Buddhism: the mind-to-mind transmission of wisdom, free from the limitations of language and concepts.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Cowpea

Cowpeas (also known as black-eyed peas, southern peas, or field peas) are a nutritious legume that aligns well with the Buddhist diet, offering various health benefits that support both physical and mental well-being.

Health Benefits of Cowpeas in a Buddhist Diet

Nutrient-Rich:

Cowpeas are an excellent source of protein, fiber, and essential nutrients such as iron, folate, magnesium, and B-vitamins. These nutrients help support overall health and are especially important in vegetarian diets, where plant-based protein sources are emphasized.

Supports Digestive Health:

The high fiber content in cowpeas promotes healthy digestion by regulating bowel movements, preventing constipation, and supporting gut microbiota. In Buddhist practice, digestion is seen as vital not only for physical health but also for mental clarity. A well-functioning digestive system can help maintain a balanced mind.

Balanced Energy:

Cowpeas are a low-glycemic food, meaning they release sugar into the bloodstream gradually, providing sustained energy without causing blood sugar spikes. This supports a steady, balanced energy level throughout the day, which is beneficial for meditation and other mindfulness practices.

Rich in Antioxidants:

Cowpeas contain a variety of antioxidants, including flavonoids and vitamins C and E, which help protect the body from oxidative stress and inflammation. These antioxidants are believed to support longevity and well-being, both key components in the Buddhist view of living harmoniously with the world.

Heart Health:

Regular consumption of cowpeas can help lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure due to their fiber, potassium, and magnesium content. A healthy heart is important for a peaceful life, which in turn supports the spiritual health necessary for meditation and mindfulness practices.

Cowpeas are a versatile and nutritious food that fits perfectly within a Buddhist diet. Their health benefits support the physical body while also contributing to the spiritual practice of mindfulness,

moderation, and compassion. As part of a balanced, plant-based diet, cowpeas help to nourish not just the body, but also the mind and heart, aligning with Buddhist principles of peace, simplicity, and mindful living.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Fried Eggplant and Cowpea



Ingredients:

For the Cowpeas:

1 cup cowpeas (fresh or dried; if using dried, soak them overnight and cook until tender)

2 cups water (for cooking)

1 teaspoon olive oil or vegetable oil

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground coriander

Salt and pepper, to taste

Optional: a pinch of chili flakes or fresh cilantro for garnish

For the Fried Eggplant:

2 medium eggplants, sliced into 1/2 inch rounds or half-moons

1/4 cup flour (all-purpose or chickpea flour for a gluten-free option)

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 teaspoon paprika or ground turmeric (for a little color)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil (or enough to shallow fry)

Steps:

Step 1: Cook the Cowpeas

Prepare the cowpeas:

If you're using dried cowpeas, soak them overnight and cook them in water until tender (about 30-40 minutes). If using fresh or canned cowpeas, you can skip this step.

Sauté the aromatics:

In a medium saucepan, heat 1 teaspoon of oil over medium heat.

Stir in the cumin, coriander, and a pinch of chili flakes (if using). Let it cook for about 1 minute to release the spices' fragrance.

Add the cowpeas:

Add the cooked cowpeas and 1-2 cups of water (depending on your preferred consistency). Let it simmer for about 10 minutes, so the flavors meld together. Adjust with salt and pepper to taste. If you like, garnish with some fresh cilantro.

Step 2: Prepare the Fried Eggplant

Slice the eggplant:

Wash and slice the eggplants into 1/2-inch rounds or half-moons. Sprinkle them with salt and let them sit for about 10 minutes to release excess moisture. After 10 minutes, pat them dry with a towel.

Coat the eggplant:

In a shallow bowl, combine the flour, black pepper, and paprika or turmeric. Dredge each slice of eggplant in this mixture, ensuring it's evenly coated.

Fry the eggplant:

Heat about 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the eggplant slices in batches, frying them until golden and crispy on both sides (about 3-4 minutes per side). Add more oil if needed between batches.

Drain and serve:

Once fried, place the eggplant slices on a paper towel to drain excess oil.

Step 3: Assemble and Serve

Layer the fried eggplant:

On a large plate or serving platter, arrange the fried eggplant slices.

Top with the cowpeas:

Spoon the cooked cowpea mixture over the eggplant.

Garnish and enjoy:

If you like, garnish with a little fresh cilantro or chili flakes for extra flavor and heat.