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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Buddha's Teaching to Mahā-Pajāpatī

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Black Sesame Flower Rolls

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Black Sesame Flower Rolls

Main content:

1: Dharma Talk:

Hello everyone! Welcome to Double Saltree Meditation Center, I am Hao Liu! Today, I would like to share the Dharma Talk topic: Buddha's Teaching to Mahā-Pajāpatī.

Mahā-Pajāpatī was the mother and aunt of the Buddha. She was not only a close relative of the Buddha but also an important figure in Buddhist history. She once requested the Buddha's permission for women to be allowed to ordain and practice as monks, and she became the first woman to be ordained in the history of Buddhism.

Though Mahā-Pajāpatī deeply respected the Buddha's wisdom and compassion, she still harbored some doubts. She was concerned whether women could receive the same teachings and attain the same liberation as men in the Dharma. One day, she approached the Buddha and asked, "Respected Buddha, as a woman, do I have enough opportunity to practice and reach enlightenment and liberation?"

The Buddha looked at her and responded gently, "Mahā-Pajāpatī, the path of practice is not determined by gender, but by the cultivation of the mind and spirit. If a person practices sincerely, upholding the precepts, diligently striving, and maintaining a pure heart, they will attain liberation. The difference of gender exists only in the physical form; a true practitioner does not differentiate in the heart."

The Buddha continued, "It is like the water in the ocean, no matter if it comes from the east or the west, it will ultimately flow into the sea. Regardless of whether one is male or female, as long as the practice is correct, liberation can be attained."

After hearing the Buddha's teaching, Mahā-Pajāpatī was deeply inspired. She decided to let go of her doubts and fully dedicate herself to the practice. She joined other women in following the Buddha's teachings, upholding the precepts, and striving diligently in her spiritual practice.

In the end, through her own effort and practice, Mahā-Pajāpatī attained profound wisdom and liberation, becoming a noble example in Buddhist history. Her story of transformation deeply reflects the

Buddha's educational philosophy—transcending gender and prejudice, with true wisdom and liberation stemming from inner cultivation and practice.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Black Sesame Flower Rolls

Black Sesame Flower Rolls are a popular and nourishing traditional Chinese pastry. In the context of the Buddhist diet, this dish not only offers great flavor but also aligns with the principles of mindful eating, moderation, and nourishment that are central to Buddhist teachings. The use of simple, plant-based ingredients makes this dish a perfect choice for those following a vegetarian or vegan diet, which is common in Buddhism.

Nutritional Benefits of Black Sesame in a Buddhist Diet

Rich in Calcium and Iron

Black sesame seeds are known for their high content of calcium and iron, which are essential minerals for maintaining strong bones and healthy blood. According to traditional Chinese medicine and Buddhist dietary principles, maintaining balance in the body is key to overall well-being, and these minerals support that balance.

Calcium helps to strengthen bones and teeth, which is important for maintaining the body's physical foundation. In Buddhism, physical health is seen as supporting the mind in meditation and mindfulness practices.

Iron is necessary for the production of red blood cells and the transport of oxygen throughout the body. Iron-rich foods like black sesame can help prevent anemia and fatigue, ensuring energy and vitality.

Rich in Healthy Fats

Black sesame seeds contain healthy fats, particularly unsaturated fats, which are beneficial for heart health. In the Buddhist context, consuming moderate amounts of healthy fats is encouraged to maintain physical well-being without indulgence or excess. Fats in the diet are also essential for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, such as Vitamin E and Vitamin A.

High in Antioxidants

Black sesame seeds are also rich in antioxidants, particularly sesamin and sesamol, which help to reduce oxidative stress and inflammation in the body. Antioxidants play a crucial role in detoxification, which aligns with the Buddhist concept of purification—cleansing the body and mind of negative energies and toxins.

Supports Digestive Health

The whole wheat flour or unrefined flour typically used in flower rolls provides dietary fiber, which is important for digestive health. Fiber helps maintain bowel regularity, preventing constipation and promoting a healthy gut. A healthy digestive system is important for overall health in Buddhism, as it supports physical well-being and mental clarity for meditation.

Boosts Skin Health

Black sesame is rich in Vitamin E, which is known for its antioxidant properties that support skin health. In Buddhism, taking care of the body is part of honoring the vessel that allows for spiritual practice. Foods like black sesame that promote healthy skin contribute to both physical well-being and the cultivation of mindfulness.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Black Sesame Flower Rolls



Ingredients:

All-purpose flour: 300g

Granulated sugar: 20g

Active dry yeast: 5g

Warm water: 150ml

Vegetable oil: 10g

Black sesame (roasted sesame seeds): 50g

Salt: 3g

Warm water: 50ml (for soaking black sesame)

Steps:

1. Prepare the Black Sesame:

Place the black sesame seeds in a dry pan and roast over low heat for about 3-5 minutes, until fragrant. Be careful not to burn them.

Transfer the roasted sesame seeds to a bowl, add 50ml of warm water, and stir well. Let it soak until soft, then set it aside for later use.

2. Prepare the Dough:

In a large bowl, mix 300g of all-purpose flour, 20g of granulated sugar, and 3g of salt.

In a separate small bowl, add the 150ml warm water to the active dry yeast. Stir well and let it sit for 5 minutes to activate the yeast.

3. Add the activated yeast mixture and 10g of vegetable oil into the flour mixture. Stir until the dough comes together. Adjust the water amount if needed to make sure the dough is not too dry or sticky. Continue mixing until the dough is smooth and no longer sticks to your hands. Cover the dough with a damp cloth and let it rest for 1 hour, allowing it to double in size.

4. Shape the Rolls:

Once the dough has risen, gently punch it down to release the air. Divide the dough into two portions. Roll each portion into a rectangle, about 1 cm thick.

5. Evenly spread the black sesame paste on the dough, then sprinkle a little extra black sesame seeds on top. You can also add a bit of sugar to balance the flavor, though it's optional.

Roll the dough up from one end to form a long log.

Cut the rolled dough into pieces, each about 5-6 cm long. Press each piece lightly with your hand to flatten slightly.

6. Second Rise:

Arrange the cut pieces of dough in a steamer basket lined with parchment or a cloth to prevent sticking. Leave some space between them.

Let the rolls rise for another 15-20 minutes until they have slightly expanded.

7. Steam the Rolls:

Fill the steamer with water and bring it to a boil.

Once the water is boiling, place the rolls in the steamer and steam them over medium heat for about 15-20 minutes until they are soft and have expanded.

After steaming, turn off the heat and let the rolls sit for 5 minutes before opening the lid to prevent them from shrinking.

8. Serve:

Open the steamer lid, and enjoy the fragrant, soft, and fluffy black sesame flower rolls. They can be served as a breakfast item or paired with vegetable dishes or soups.