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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Buddha's Teaching to Sakka, the King of the Tāvātimsa Heaven

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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 Sakka, the King of the Tāvātimsa Heaven.

Sakka, the King of the Tāvātimsa Heaven, was a powerful and revered ruler among the gods. Though he possessed great wealth, authority, and pleasure, he often found himself troubled by inner anxiety and the impermanence of his existence. He longed for true peace and wisdom, which led him to seek the teachings of the Buddha.

One day, Sakka visited the Buddha, humbling himself before him, and asked, "Respected Buddha, I rule over the Tāvātimsa Heaven and enjoy unimaginable wealth and pleasures, yet I am troubled by the uncertainty of life and the fear of loss. How can I find lasting peace, free from these worries, and attain liberation?"

The Buddha, with a calm and serene expression, responded: "Sakka, the happiness that you experience in the heavenly realms, and even the wealth and power you possess, are all fleeting. These are all conditioned by cause and effect and are subject to change. True peace comes not from external conditions, but from within the heart."

The Buddha continued, "Like a person who drinks water from a stream that appears clear but turns muddy when disturbed, the mind is also like that water. When disturbed by desires and attachment, it becomes clouded. Only when one learns to cultivate a calm and peaceful mind, free from attachment, can they find true peace."

To further explain his point, the Buddha told Sakka a parable: "Once, there was a king who ruled a prosperous kingdom. The king had all the riches and pleasures anyone could desire, but his heart was restless, filled with anxiety and insecurity about his position. One day, an old wise hermit came to the king and offered him a simple piece of advice: 'Your kingdom is vast, but it is not the kingdom you

should be concerned with; it is your own mind that needs to be governed. If you can rule your mind with wisdom and equanimity, then you will truly rule over all."

Sakka listened attentively and understood the deeper meaning of the story. The Buddha concluded, "Sakka, just as the king must govern his mind, so must you. While you may possess great power, it is your mind that requires true mastery. Only through wisdom, mindfulness, and compassion can you find the lasting peace you seek."

Sakka, deeply moved by the Buddha's teachings, realized that despite his heavenly position, his inner peace had been disturbed by his attachment to the impermanent and material world. He understood that true liberation could not be attained through power, wealth, or external circumstances, but by cultivating wisdom and serenity within.

With renewed determination, Sakka decided to follow the Buddha's advice and began to practice mindfulness, self-control, and compassion. He sought to overcome his attachment to his heavenly realm, embracing the impermanence of all things and focusing on inner peace. Over time, Sakka's heart became more peaceful, and he found the wisdom and freedom he had long sought.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Tofu Pudding

Tofu Pudding, also known as Douhua or Tofu Nao, is a traditional Chinese dish made from fresh soy milk that has been coagulated into a smooth, delicate custard-like texture. In the context of the Buddhist diet, tofu pudding holds both spiritual and nutritional significance. It is a simple, plant-based dish that aligns with Buddhist principles of mindfulness, compassion, and nourishment.

Nutritional Benefits of Tofu Pudding in a Buddhist Diet

Rich in Plant-Based Protein

Tofu pudding is made primarily from soybeans, which are an excellent source of plant-based protein. For those following a vegetarian or vegan Buddhist diet, soy-based products are a valuable protein source. This is essential for maintaining physical strength and energy without relying on animal-based products, in alignment with the Buddhist principle of ahimsa (non-harming).

Soy protein also helps repair body tissues, maintain muscle mass, and support metabolic functions, making it an excellent choice for sustaining energy throughout the day, especially for those who engage in meditation or other physical practices.

Easily Digestible

Tofu pudding has a smooth, soft texture, making it easy on the digestive system. In Buddhism, dietary practices often emphasize food that is gentle on the stomach and promotes digestive health. This dish is ideal for those looking for a light, easily digestible meal that still provides essential nutrients.

Rich in Essential Minerals

Calcium and iron are two essential minerals found in tofu, both of which are crucial for maintaining bone health and preventing anemia. Many people following a plant-based Buddhist diet may face challenges in getting enough calcium, but tofu is a great source, especially when paired with fortified versions. Iron is essential for red blood cell production and oxygen transport, vital for overall vitality.

Low in Fat

Tofu pudding is naturally low in fat, particularly saturated fat. By consuming low-fat plant-based foods like tofu, Buddhists can maintain a balanced diet that promotes cardiovascular health while avoiding excess and indulgence. Moderation in fat intake is key in Buddhism, as it helps avoid attachment to sensory pleasures and maintains physical and spiritual balance.

Promotes Mental Clarity

The simplicity and lightness of tofu pudding make it ideal for mindful eating, which is a core practice in Buddhism. Mindful eating involves being fully present and aware of the food you're consuming, and tofu pudding's delicate flavor and smooth texture provide an excellent opportunity to practice this mindfulness. When eating this dish, it's important to savor each bite slowly, appreciating its nourishing qualities.

Alkalizing for the Body

Tofu, made from soybeans, is alkalizing in nature. It helps balance the body's pH levels, reducing acidity. This is particularly beneficial for maintaining optimal health, as excess acidity can lead to inflammation and other health issues. Alkalizing foods support the body's natural detoxification processes, an important aspect of Buddhist teachings on purification.

Calming and Soothing

The soft, smooth texture of tofu pudding has a calming effect on the mind and body. This aligns with Buddhist practices that emphasize calmness and equanimity. Eating foods like tofu pudding, which have a gentle and soothing nature, can support meditation and relaxation, enhancing mental clarity and focus during practice.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Tofu Pudding



Ingredients:

Soybeans: 200g

Water: About 1500ml (used in two parts)

Nitrate (Coagulant): 5g (available at food stores)

Toppings (Choose based on personal taste):

Coriander: To taste

Soy sauce: To taste

Sesame oil: To taste

Chili oil: To taste

Vinegar: To taste

Yellow bean paste: To taste (add if you prefer a slightly salty flavor)

Vegetable broth: To taste (can use store-bought or homemade vegetarian broth)

Steps:

1. Soak Soybeans:

Rinse the soybeans and place them in a large bowl. Add enough water to cover the beans and soak for at least 8 hours or overnight, until the beans become soft and swollen.

2. Make Soy Milk:

After soaking, drain the soybeans and place them in a blender. Add about 1000ml of clean water.

Blend the soybeans into a smooth soy milk, then strain out the soy pulp using a cheesecloth or fine sieve to obtain smooth soy milk.

3. Heat the Soy Milk:

Pour the strained soy milk into a pot and heat it over medium heat until it is near boiling. Stir constantly to prevent burning at the bottom. Once the soy milk begins to boil, skim off any foam and continue to simmer for another 1-2 minutes.

4. Prepare the Coagulant (Nitrate):

In a small bowl, mix 5g of coagulant (Nitrate) with 50ml of warm water. Stir well until the coagulant completely dissolves, forming a coagulant solution.

5. Coagulate the Soy Milk:

Remove the hot soy milk from the heat and allow it to cool slightly to about 80-85°C (warm but not too hot). Slowly pour the coagulant solution into the soy milk, stirring gently to mix.

After stirring, cover the pot with a lid or a damp cloth and let it sit undisturbed for 15-20 minutes, allowing the soy milk to naturally set into tofu pudding.

6. Prepare Toppings:

While the tofu pudding is setting, prepare the toppings. Choose according to personal taste, such as fresh coriander, chili oil, soy sauce, sesame oil, and vinegar. Mix them into small bowls to create your dipping sauces.

7. Serve and Enjoy:

Once the tofu pudding has set, gently scoop out the smooth, silky tofu pudding with a spoon and place it into bowls. Add the prepared seasonings and toppings, then serve and enjoy!