

Date: 01/17/2026 01/18/2026

Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Blessings Arise from the Mind — Awakening Through a Pair of Old Shoes

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Shiitake

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Shiitake & Tofu “Field of Blessings” Stir-Fry

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: Blessings Arise from the Mind — Awakening Through a Pair of Old Shoes.

While walking on his journey, the Buddha once met a traveling merchant who complained endlessly—about the rough roads, the scorching sun, and the pain in his feet.

Ānanda asked him,

“Why are you so troubled?”

The merchant replied,

“This world is full of hardship. I don’t even have a decent pair of shoes—every step is painful.”

The Buddha then led him to the roadside and pointed to a man who had lost both feet and was moving forward on a wooden board.

“Look again,” the Buddha said.

The merchant fell silent. Looking down at his own feet, tears welled up in his eyes.

The Buddha spoke gently,

“What causes your suffering is not worn shoes, but a heart that does not know contentment.”

In that moment, the merchant’s distress dissolved.

The Buddha taught,

“Many suffer because of what they possess, and few awaken through what they lack. When the mind is content, everywhere becomes a field of blessings.”

True blessing lies not beneath one’s feet, but in gratitude within the heart.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Shiitake

Mushrooms have long been valued in Buddhist vegetarian cooking as a natural source of richness without relying on animal products. Shiitake, in particular, is known for its earthy aroma and umami taste, which brings satisfaction while remaining light and balanced. In temple cuisine, shiitake symbolizes humility, resilience, and harmony with nature, growing quietly in shaded forests and requiring patience to cultivate.

Nutritional and Wellness Benefits

From a traditional wellness perspective, shiitake mushrooms are considered warming and strengthening while remaining gentle on the body. They are believed to:

Support overall vitality

Strengthen the immune system

Promote healthy circulation

Aid digestion without heaviness

Shiitake mushrooms are naturally low in fat and calories, yet rich in plant nutrients. Their ability to enhance flavor allows Buddhist meals to remain simple, avoiding excessive oil, salt, or strong seasonings.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Shiitake & Tofu “Field of Blessings” Stir-Fry



Ingredients:

Dried shiitake mushrooms – 4 pieces

Firm tofu (pressed) – 2 blocks

Leafy greens (bok choy or similar) – appropriate amount

Steps:

1. Soak mushrooms and slice; cut tofu into strips.
2. Heat a small amount of vegetable oil; sauté mushrooms until fragrant.
3. Add tofu, stir lightly, then add a little water and simmer briefly.
4. Add greens and cook just until tender.