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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Blessings Arise from the Mind — So Do Suffering and Joy

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Dried lotus seeds

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Pure Three Jewels Soup

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, So Do Suffering and Joy. The Buddha once said, “When the mind is pure, the land is pure; when the mind is at peace, all beings are at peace.”

People in the world often seek blessings outwardly—seeking wealth, status, and favorable circumstances—yet they do not realize that true blessings do not come from external conditions, but from a single thought of the mind. To illustrate this truth, the Buddha once told a simple yet profound story that awakened many who were lost.

It is said that when the Buddha was still in the world, he once went out on alms rounds with his disciple Ānanda. Along the way, they encountered an elderly man with a sorrowful expression. His clothes were tattered, and he clutched tightly to a worn clay jar, his face full of tension, as if he were about to lose everything he had.

Seeing this, Ānanda felt compassion and stepped forward to ask,

“Sir, why are you so troubled?”

The old man sighed and replied,

“I have lived my whole life in poverty. This jar is my only possession. Every day I worry that it will be stolen or broken. I cannot sleep at night, and my heart is filled with fear.”

Ānanda found this puzzling and asked the Buddha for guidance. The Buddha smiled gently and said to the old man,

“Would you be willing to put the jar down for a moment?”

After hesitating for a long while, the old man finally placed the jar gently on the ground. At that very moment, he let out a deep breath, and the tension on his face suddenly disappeared.

The Buddha asked him,

“How is your mind now?”

The old man was taken aback and said,

“Strange... my possession is still here, yet my heart feels much lighter.”

With compassion, the Buddha said,

“What causes your suffering is not poverty, but your attachment to ‘having.’ Blessing and suffering are not in the jar; they are in your mind.”

At once, the old man awakened to this truth. He bowed deeply to the Buddha in gratitude. From that day on, though he remained poor, he was no longer bound by fear and anxiety. Instead, a calm and peaceful smile often appeared on his face.

This story teaches us: blessings arise from the mind, and suffering also arises from the mind.

When the heart is entangled in greed, anger, and fear, even great wealth becomes a burden. When the heart knows how to let go, to be content and grateful, even a simple life can be lived with peace and ease.

People often believe that once conditions improve and possessions increase, blessings will naturally follow. Yet the Buddha reminds us: first settle the mind, and blessings will come of themselves.

When the heart widens by an inch, the path widens by a 丈; when a kind thought arises, the world responds with gentleness.

True blessing is not about gaining more in one’s destiny, but about having less attachment in one’s heart.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Dried lotus seeds

In Buddhist dietary tradition, food is regarded not merely as sustenance for the body, but as nourishment for the mind and spirit. Simplicity, purity, and balance are central principles. Among the many plant-based ingredients valued in Buddhist cuisine, dried lotus seeds hold a special place for their gentle flavor, nutritional benefits, and symbolic meaning.

The lotus plant is deeply symbolic in Buddhism, representing purity, wisdom, and enlightenment. Growing from muddy waters yet blooming untainted, the lotus embodies the ideal of spiritual clarity amid worldly complexity. Lotus seeds, as the fruit of this sacred plant, are often associated with continuity, inner calm, and spiritual potential. Including lotus seeds in daily meals reflects the Buddhist emphasis on mindful eating and harmony with nature.

Nutritional and Health Benefits

From a health perspective, dried lotus seeds are highly valued in traditional Asian wellness systems.

Rich in plant-based protein, supporting physical strength without heaviness

High in complex carbohydrates, providing steady, sustained energy

A natural source of minerals such as magnesium and potassium

In traditional Chinese dietary therapy, lotus seeds are believed to:

Support digestive health

Calm the mind and improve sleep quality

Strengthen vitality without overstimulation

These qualities align well with Buddhist dietary goals: foods that nourish gently, avoid excess, and support mental clarity.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Pure Three Jewels Soup



Ingredients:

Dried lotus seeds – 20 g

Red dates (jujubes), pitted – 6–8 pieces

Goji berries – 10 g

Water – 1.2–1.5 liters

Steps:

1. Soak the lotus seeds for 2–4 hours (or overnight in the refrigerator).
2. Remove the green cores to reduce bitterness.
3. Rinse the red dates and lightly crack them.
4. Rinse the goji berries briefly and set aside.
5. Add water, lotus seeds, and red dates to a pot.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce to low heat and simmer for 30–40 minutes.
7. Add goji berries during the last 5 minutes.
8. Turn off the heat and let the soup rest for 5 minutes before serving.