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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Life Is Shaped by the Mind: The Night the Buddha Truly Lived

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Temple-Style Luohan Vegetarian Stir-Fry

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Shanghai bok choy

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: Life Is Shaped by the Mind: The Night the Buddha Truly Lived.

Before he became the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama was very close to death.

After six years of extreme ascetic practice, his body was barely holding together. He was thin, weak, and exhausted. Many believed he would not survive much longer. Yet what kept him alive was not physical strength—it was a mind that had not given up.

On the night he sat beneath the Bodhi tree, Siddhartha finally let go of his struggle to force enlightenment. He stopped fighting hunger, pain, and fear. He simply sat, breathing, watching his mind as it was.

Nothing outside him changed. His body was still weak. But inside, something softened.

For the first time, his mind stopped consuming itself.

Buddhist texts do not say that he discovered a secret medicine that night. They say his mind became still. And when the mind stops burning energy through fear and resistance, life begins to return.

Many lives are not shortened by illness alone, but by endless inner conflict—worry, ambition, resentment, and self-judgment. When the mind rests, the body follows.

Later, the Buddha taught: “All phenomena arise from the mind.” Life itself is no exception. How long we live is not only measured in years, but in how much of life is wasted through inner struggle.

Life is shaped by the mind—not because the mind makes the body immortal, but because peace stops life from being unnecessarily consumed.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Shanghai bok choy

Shanghai bok choy is very common in Buddhist vegetarian cuisine. Though it looks simple and light, it is actually highly nutrient-dense, making it especially suitable for those who value clean eating and balance of body and mind.

Health benefits

1. Vitamin A (β-Carotene) — Eye Health, Skin, Emotional Stability

Protects vision, helpful for long hours of sutra reading or meditation

Supports skin and mucosal health, reducing dryness common in vegetarians

2. Vitamin C — Immunity and Tissue Repair

Strengthens immune defenses

Helps reduce seasonal discomfort

Enhances iron absorption, which is especially important for vegetarians

Acts as an antioxidant, slowing cellular aging

3. Vitamin K — Bone and Blood Health

Helps calcium deposit properly into bones

Supports normal blood clotting

Particularly beneficial for middle-aged and elderly vegetarian practitioners

4. Calcium & Potassium — Bones and Cardiovascular Support

Although not the highest in absolute quantity, they are well absorbed:

Calcium: Supports bones and teeth

Potassium: Balances sodium, stabilizes blood pressure, protects the heart

5. Dietary Fiber — Digestive Cleanliness and Smooth Qi Flow

Promotes intestinal movement

Reduces bloating common among vegetarians

Helps eliminate waste and internal “turbidity”

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Temple-Style Luohan Vegetarian Stir-Fry



Ingredients:

4 dried shiitake mushrooms
1 small handful dried wood ear mushrooms
1 carrot
200 g Chinese cabbage or Shanghai bok choy
2 sticks dried bean curd skin (yuba)
2–3 slices fresh ginger
1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
½–1 teaspoon salt
2–3 tablespoons reserved shiitake soaking water

Steps:

1. Heat the wok first, then add oil

Use low heat and add ginger slices

Stir gently until fragrant

2. Add Firm Ingredients First

Add shiitake mushrooms, stir-fry over medium-low heat for 1–2 minutes

Add carrots and wood ear mushrooms, stir well

Add Mushroom Water

3. Pour in 2–3 tablespoons of reserved shiitake soaking water

This creates a gentle steaming effect

This step is key to the natural umami flavor

4. Add Bean Curd Skin and Vegetable Stems

Stir-fry until the yuba absorbs flavor and the stems soften

Add Leafy Greens Last

Increase heat slightly

5. Add leaves, toss quickly

Season with salt and turn off heat