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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Wealth Arises from the Mind: The Story of the Poor Woman Offering a Lamp

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Wheat Gluten

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Braised Wheat Gluten with Mushrooms

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: Wealth Arises from the Mind: The Story of the Poor Woman Offering a Lamp. In the world, many people believe that wealth comes from hard work, opportunity, or favorable circumstances. However, the Buddha taught that the true root of wealth is merit, and the root of merit is a wholesome and compassionate mind.

During the time of the Buddha, the king of Śrāvastī once made a grand offering to the Buddha and the monastic community. Thousands of lamps were lit in the monastery, illuminating the entire place with magnificent light.

At that time, a very poor elderly woman happened to pass by the monastery. When she saw the brilliant lamps and the solemn atmosphere, her heart was filled with joy and reverence.

She thought to herself:

“Although the king can make such great offerings, I am poor. But if I can offer even a single lamp to the Buddha, it would still be a meritorious deed.”

However, she only had one small coin.

With that single coin, she bought a little oil and lit a small lamp to offer to the Buddha with deep sincerity.

Late at night, most of the lamps offered by the king gradually went out. Yet the small lamp offered by the poor woman continued to shine brightly.

The next morning, a disciple tried to extinguish the lamp but could not put it out.

Seeing this, the Buddha smiled and said:

“This lamp cannot be extinguished because the one who offered it did so with a pure and sincere heart. Although she is poor, she gave all that she had. The merit of her offering surpasses that of many wealthy donors.”

The Buddha further taught:

“All blessings in the world arise from the mind.”

Although the woman lacked material wealth, her heart was rich with sincerity and devotion, and therefore her merit was immeasurable.

From the perspective of the law of cause and effect, wealth does not arise by chance. It is the result of wholesome actions from the past.

If a person practices generosity and helps others, they will naturally receive wealth and good fortune in the future.

Therefore, the Buddha taught:

“If one wishes to obtain wealth, one should practice generosity.”

A person who only accumulates wealth but refuses to share it will gradually exhaust their merit. But one who cultivates kindness and generosity will see their blessings grow.

Thus we must understand:

True wealth is not stored in banks, but in the heart.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Wheat Gluten

Among the many plant-based foods used in Buddhist vegetarian cooking, wheat gluten is a popular and versatile ingredient. Known for its chewy texture and ability to absorb flavors, wheat gluten has been used in temple cuisine for centuries. It provides a satisfying and nutritious alternative to meat while maintaining the principles of a compassionate diet.

Wheat gluten, sometimes known as seitan in modern vegetarian cooking, is made from the protein found in wheat. It is produced by washing wheat flour dough with water to remove the starch, leaving behind the elastic protein known as gluten.

This protein-rich food has a firm and slightly chewy texture, making it ideal for a wide range of vegetarian dishes such as braised dishes, stir-fries, soups, and stews.

In Buddhist temple kitchens, wheat gluten has long been used to create nourishing and flavorful vegetarian meals.

Nutritional Benefits of Wheat Gluten

Wheat gluten is valued not only for its texture but also for its nutritional benefits.

1. High in Plant-Based Protein

Wheat gluten contains a high level of plant protein, which helps support muscle health and provides energy for daily activities.

2. Low in Fat

Compared with many other protein sources, wheat gluten is naturally low in fat, making it suitable for a healthy vegetarian diet.

3. Source of Minerals

Wheat gluten contains minerals such as iron and selenium, which contribute to overall health and immune support.

4. Satisfying and Filling

Because of its dense texture and protein content, wheat gluten helps create a feeling of fullness, which may support balanced eating habits.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Braised Wheat Gluten with Mushrooms



Ingredients:

250 g wheat gluten

6 dried shiitake mushrooms

100 g leafy greens (such as bok choy or Chinese greens)

1 tablespoon soy sauce

Salt to taste

A few drops of sesame oil

1 cup water (or mushroom soaking water)

Steps:

1. Preparation

Soak the mushrooms

Place the dried shiitake mushrooms in warm water for about 20 minutes until softened. Slice them thinly and reserve the soaking water for cooking.

2. Prepare the wheat gluten

Cut the wheat gluten into bite-sized pieces.

3. Prepare the vegetables

Wash the leafy greens thoroughly and cut them into sections.

4. Cooking Instructions

Sauté the mushrooms

Heat a small amount of vegetable oil in a pan. Add the sliced mushrooms and stir-fry for about 2 minutes until fragrant.

5. Add the wheat gluten

Add the wheat gluten pieces to the pan and stir gently so they absorb the mushroom flavor.

6. Season the dish

Pour in soy sauce and vegetarian oyster sauce. Stir well.

7. Simmer

Add about 1 cup of mushroom soaking water. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes so the wheat gluten can absorb the savory broth.

8. Add the greens

Add the leafy greens and cook for another 1–2 minutes.

9. Finish the dish

Add salt if needed and drizzle a few drops of sesame oil before serving.