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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Abiding in the Present — Revealing Innate Joy Through Awareness.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Dried Tangerine Peel

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Red Bean Paste with Dried Tangerine Peel & Mini Glutinous Rice Balls

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: Abiding in the Present — Revealing Innate Joy Through Awareness. Much of human suffering arises from a single habit: not abiding in the present moment.

We dwell on the past and become trapped in regret.

We project into the future and become consumed by worry.

Yet the past is already gone, and the future has not yet arrived. Only this present moment—this single thought right now—is real and directly accessible.

The Buddha, Shakyamuni, understood this deeply and taught the practice of mindfulness—clear and steady awareness of the present, free from distraction and confusion.

A monk once asked, “What is the essence of practice?”

The Buddha replied, “When walking, know that you are walking; when sitting, know that you are sitting.”

Simple words, yet profoundly meaningful.

To “know” in this sense is not mere recognition, but a clear, direct awareness of experience as it unfolds—of the body’s movements, the breath’s rhythm, and the mind’s activity—without drifting into distraction.

There is also the story of Bāhiya, a seeker who urgently requested instruction. The Buddha gave him a concise teaching:

“In the seen, there is only the seen;

in the heard, only the heard;

in the sensed, only the sensed.”

This points to a state of pure awareness—free from interpretation, judgment, and attachment. When experience is known directly, without adding layers of thought, the mind is no longer entangled in its own projections.

Upon hearing this, Bāhiya awakened.

This illustrates that returning to the present moment is not a superficial exercise—it is a direct path to liberation.

When the mind truly settles in the present, wandering thoughts begin to quiet. Such thoughts are often echoes of the past or anticipations of the future—mental constructions rather than reality. When we stop following them, they naturally fade, like clouds passing through the sky.

As discursive thinking subsides, the mind becomes clear. And when the mind is clear, joy naturally reveals itself.

This joy is not something we manufacture. It is not dependent on external conditions. It is an inherent quality of the mind itself.

The Buddha often used the analogy of water: water is naturally clear, but when stirred by wind, it becomes turbulent. When the wind ceases, the water settles and becomes transparent again.

So too with the mind. Its nature is clarity and stillness, but it appears agitated due to restless thoughts and attachments.

When we constantly chase external experiences, the mind becomes like wind-driven waves. When we return to the present, the mind gradually settles, like a calm lake reflecting everything without distortion.

In this stillness, a subtle yet stable form of joy arises. It is quiet, gentle, and enduring.

This is known as the joy of tranquility.

The Buddha taught the practice of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). Its essence is simple: know the in-breath as in-breath, know the out-breath as out-breath. When the breath is long, know it as long; when short, know it as short.

The breath always occurs in the present moment. By attending to it, we anchor the mind in the here and now.

When thoughts arise, there is no need to suppress or chase them. Simply recognize: “This is a thought.” Seeing clearly in this way, the thought dissolves on its own. Then gently return to the breath, to the body.

Though simple, this practice gradually strengthens stability and clarity of mind.

Over time, the mind becomes less reactive, less easily pulled by external conditions. Even in a noisy or complex environment, an inner stillness can remain.

There is a story of a monk who practiced for many years without progress. Troubled, he sought guidance from the Buddha. Instead of offering complex teachings, the Buddha instructed him simply to observe his own body and mind.

At first, the monk found this too ordinary. But he persisted. Gradually, he began to see how thoughts arise, change, and pass away; how emotions grow when grasped and fade when observed.

One day, upon directly seeing the arising and passing of a single thought, his mind opened. His burdens fell away, and a deep sense of peace emerged.

He realized then: the path is not elsewhere—it is in this very moment of awareness.

Mindfulness is not limited to formal meditation. It can be practiced in every aspect of daily life:

When walking, know you are walking.

When eating, know you are eating.

When speaking, know you are speaking.

When working, attend fully to the task at hand.

In this way, life itself becomes the practice.

A farmer once asked the Buddha, “I work all day in the fields—can I still practice?”

The Buddha asked, “When you are working, where is your mind?”

The farmer replied, “Often thinking about the harvest.”

The Buddha said, “If while working you know that you are working, and your mind does not wander, that itself is practice.”

Thus, practice is not about form, but about awareness.

As awareness becomes steady, the mind no longer drifts aimlessly. External conditions may still change, but inwardly there is stability, like a mountain unmoved by the wind.

Within stillness, there is peace.

Within peace, there is joy.

This joy does not depend on success or failure, praise or blame. It arises naturally from a mind that is present and undisturbed.

The Buddha also taught: “One who guards the mind, happiness follows like a shadow.”

To guard the mind is to prevent it from scattering, to remain aware, and to refrain from clinging.

When the mind is well cared for, it returns to its natural clarity. And when clarity is present, joy reveals itself effortlessly.

Thus, “joy arises from the mind” is not merely a concept—it is something that can be directly experienced.

When the present moment is clear, the past and future lose their hold.

When the mind abides here, it is no longer shaken by changing conditions.

When the present is undisturbed, the mind is luminous.

When the mind is luminous, what need is there to seek joy elsewhere?

May you, in the midst of daily life, return again and again to this moment—aware, grounded, and present. In time, you will discover a quiet, self-sustaining joy that has always been there, waiting to be seen.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Dried Tangerine Peel

In a Buddhist or temple-style diet, dried tangerine peel (chenpi) is a classic aromatic ingredient valued for its lightness, medicinal balance, and ability to harmonize simple plant-based foods.

Dried tangerine peel is made from aged citrus peel and is commonly used in teas, soups, congee, and desserts like red bean soup.

1. Digestive Support

In traditional East Asian dietary theory:

Helps regulate Qi (energy flow) in the digestive system

May reduce bloating and feelings of fullness

Supports smoother digestion after heavier meals (like beans or grains)

2. Aromatic “Harmonizer”

Chenpi is often used as a balancing ingredient:

Adds fragrance and mild bitterness

Blends and softens stronger flavors (beans, sweets, grains)

Helps unify different ingredients in a dish

3. Light Stimulation Without Heaviness

Unlike strong spices:

It provides aroma rather than heat or intensity

Does not rely on oil or rich seasoning

4. Traditional Energy Balance

In traditional Chinese medicine concepts:

Considered mildly warming

Thought to help move stagnant energy

Often used in small amounts for balance rather than dominance

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Red Bean Paste with Dried Tangerine Peel & Mini Glutinous Rice Balls



Ingredients:

Red bean paste

200g red beans

1 small piece dried tangerine peel (about 3–5g)

Rock sugar (to taste)

Water (as needed)

Mini rice balls

150g glutinous rice flour

Warm water (as needed)

Steps:

1. Prepare the red beans

Soak red beans for at least 4 hours or overnight

Soak the dried tangerine peel in warm water, then scrape off the white inner layer (to reduce bitterness)

2. Cook the red bean paste

Add red beans and dried tangerine peel to a pot

Add water until it covers the beans by about 2–3 cm

Bring to a boil, then simmer on low heat for 1–1.5 hours until soft

Add rock sugar to taste

3. Make mini rice balls

Mix glutinous rice flour with warm water to form a smooth dough

Roll into small balls (smaller than regular tangyuan)

4. Cook the rice balls

Boil water and add the mini rice balls

Cook until they float, then boil for another 1–2 minutes

Remove and drain

5. Combine

Add the cooked rice balls into the red bean soup

Heat together for 1–2 minutes to let the flavors blend