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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

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Topics:

**1: Dharma Talk: Form arises from the mind — Compassion Is the Most Noble Appearance.**

**2: Buddhist Diet Health: Mugwort (Artemisia)**

**3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Mugwort Glutinous Rice Green Rice Balls (Qingtuan) with Red Bean**

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: Form arises from the mind — Compassion Is the Most Noble Appearance. Everyone wishes to appear dignified, beautiful, and blessed. Some people focus on clothing and appearance, others invest in beauty and self-care, and many seek to enhance their image through external adornments.

However, Buddhism teaches us that true dignity does not come from outward appearance but from the heart. True beauty is not found in physical features but in compassion.

The Buddhist scriptures teach:

“Appearance arises from the mind, and circumstances change according to the mind.”

A person's appearance reflects the state of their inner world, while their temperament reveals the result of long-term cultivation.

A person filled with compassion may have ordinary features, yet naturally radiates warmth and kindness.

A person filled with resentment and hostility may possess striking physical beauty, yet fail to inspire genuine respect.

Therefore, today we should understand a profound truth:

Compassion is the most noble appearance a person can possess.

The life of the Buddha is the most perfect manifestation of compassion.

After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha could have remained in the peace of liberation, detached from worldly concerns.

Yet when he saw that countless beings were still suffering through birth, aging, sickness, and death, great compassion arose within him.

The Buddha declared:

“Having attained the Way, I shall open the gate of Dharma and offer the nectar of truth to all beings.”

For forty-nine years he taught tirelessly, holding more than three hundred Dharma assemblies and traveling throughout the lands surrounding the Ganges River.

He endured countless hardships in order to guide living beings toward liberation.

People often praised the Buddha's thirty-two major marks and eighty minor characteristics, describing him as supremely majestic and beautiful.

Yet the Buddha's magnificence did not arise solely from accumulated merit and virtue.

It arose because his compassion was immeasurable and boundless.

The scriptures tell us that regardless of wealth or poverty, social status or caste, the Buddha treated everyone equally.

When kings approached him, he received them with compassion.

When beggars approached him, he received them with compassion.

When virtuous people came, he welcomed them with compassion.

When wrongdoers came, he likewise embraced them with compassion.

The Buddha's dignity naturally flowed from his great loving-kindness and compassion.

There is a famous story from the Buddha's time.

One day, a monk suffering from a severe illness lay alone in bed. His body was covered in filth, and no one was willing to care for him.

While inspecting the monastic community, the Buddha discovered the situation.

Without hesitation, he personally fetched warm water and carefully washed the sick monk.

Venerable Ānanda, deeply moved by the Buddha's example, joined him in caring for the monk.

Afterward, the Buddha gathered the monks and taught:

“Whoever cares for the sick cares for the Tathāgata. Whoever serves the sick serves the Tathāgata.”

These words have been remembered for centuries.

Reflect on this for a moment.

The Buddha was the Teacher of gods and humans, yet he personally cared for a suffering monk.

What inspired such action?

The answer is compassion.

Compassion is not merely a slogan.

It is care expressed through action.

Compassion is not pity from a position of superiority.

It is the ability to understand another's suffering as if it were one's own.

A truly compassionate person naturally radiates gentleness in their face and warmth in their speech.

Such dignity cannot be created by cosmetics, fashion, or ornamentation.

It arises from the heart.

Another well-known figure from the Buddha's time was Angulimāla.

Misled by a misguided teacher, he embarked upon a path of violence and murder.

His hands became stained with blood, and people throughout the country trembled at the mention of his name.

Yet when the Buddha encountered this dangerous man, he felt neither hatred nor fear.

Instead, he addressed him with compassion:

“I have stopped. When will you stop?”

Angulimāla did not understand.

The Buddha explained:

“I have stopped harming living beings, but you have not yet stopped.”

These words struck him like a thunderbolt.

At that moment, his heart awakened.

Eventually he laid down his weapons, entered the monastic order, practiced diligently, and attained liberation.

Had the Buddha responded to hatred with hatred, or anger with anger, Angulimāla might never have changed.

Because the Buddha transformed evil through compassion, a lost life was saved.

Therefore compassion not only transforms ourselves—it also transforms others.

In daily life, many conflicts and sufferings arise from a lack of compassion.

Between husband and wife, more understanding and less criticism bring harmony.

Between parents and children, more acceptance and less control bring peace.

Between friends, more empathy and less calculation strengthen relationships.

Between colleagues, more kindness and less jealousy create cooperation.

When compassion grows, relationships naturally improve.

Why do some people immediately make us feel comfortable and joyful upon meeting them?

It is not necessarily because they are wealthy.

Nor is it because they possess high status.

Rather, they carry a calming and reassuring presence.

That presence is compassion.

Compassionate people speak gently.

Compassionate people are sincere.

Compassionate people avoid harming others.

Compassionate people willingly offer help.

Over time, their eyes become softer, their expressions more peaceful, and their demeanor more dignified.

This is precisely what Buddhism means by:

“Appearance arises from the mind.”

Whatever resides in the heart eventually appears on the face.

A person who lives in constant anger often displays harshness in their features.

A person who continually complains often appears burdened and unhappy.

A person consumed by jealousy often reveals dissatisfaction through their eyes.

But one who consistently cultivates compassion radiates serenity and light, even in old age.

Ancient masters therefore taught:

“Compassion is invincible.”

The greatest power in the world is not wealth.

It is not political authority.

It is a compassionate heart.

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha taught:

“Hatred is never ended by hatred; hatred is ended by love. This is an eternal law.”

When others hurt us, responding with anger only deepens conflict.

When we respond with compassion and wisdom, many problems dissolve naturally.

Of course, compassion is not weakness.

Compassion is strength guided by wisdom.

Compassion does not mean abandoning principles.

Rather, it means upholding principles without giving rise to hatred.

The Buddha subdued wrongdoers through compassion.

Bodhisattvas save beings through compassion.

And for those who practice Buddhism, cultivating compassion is among the most important aspects of spiritual development.

How do we cultivate compassion?

The Buddha taught the practice of loving-kindness meditation.

When seeing others, wish for them to be free from suffering and attain happiness.

When seeing others succeed, rejoice sincerely in their achievements.

When seeing others make mistakes, respond with understanding and patience.

When encountering those who suffer, extend a helping hand.

By training the mind in this way every day, compassion gradually grows.

And when compassion becomes a habit, our appearance, character, and destiny all begin to change.

Dear Dharma friends,

The most valuable treasure in life is not money stored in a bank.

It is compassion stored in the heart.

The most beautiful face is not one that remains forever young.

It is one illuminated by enduring kindness.

The most magnificent adornment is not jewelry or luxurious clothing.

It is a heart that is gentle and compassionate.

May we all learn from the Buddha's example.

May we treat others with compassion, live with compassion, and practice the Dharma with compassion.

May our words bring warmth.

May our actions bring kindness.

May our hearts shine with wisdom and light.

When compassion becomes part of our lives, we naturally acquire the most noble appearance.

Let us conclude with these words:

Compassion gives rise to blessings and wisdom;

Harmony reveals true dignity.

When love abides within the heart,

Lotuses bloom everywhere.

May all of you cultivate compassion extensively, create wholesome connections, increase your blessings and wisdom, and advance steadily on the path to enlightenment.

Amitabha Buddha!

## **2: Buddhist Diet Health: Mugwort (Artemisia)**

Mugwort has long held an important place in traditional Chinese dietary and wellness culture. Within the context of Buddhist vegetarian dietary practice, food is guided by the principles of purity, naturalness, and moderation. Mugwort, as a naturally growing plant with a distinctive fragrance, is commonly used in seasonal vegetarian foods and traditional wellness recipes, reflecting the harmony between humans and nature.

Mugwort has a warm nature and a slightly pungent aroma. In traditional dietary and wellness practices, it is believed to help balance cold and damp conditions and gently support the body's overall well-being. In folk culinary traditions, mugwort is often used to make vegetarian foods such as green rice balls (qingtuan), rice cakes, and steamed pastries, adding both color and a unique herbal fragrance. When combined with natural ingredients such as glutinous rice and red bean paste, it creates a simple yet nourishing dietary style.

From a modern nutritional perspective, mugwort contains essential oils, flavonoids, and various plant-based bioactive compounds. These components are associated with antioxidant properties and contribute a natural aromatic quality to food. However, mugwort is typically used in small amounts as a flavoring ingredient rather than as a main food source, which aligns with the Buddhist principle of mindful and moderate eating.

In Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, food is not only a means of sustaining life but also a practice of cultivating mindfulness and inner peace. Incorporating mugwort into food—such as in mugwort green rice balls or vegetarian pastries—preserves traditional seasonal food culture while expressing gratitude and appreciation for nature’s gifts. Pure and simple food nourishes both the body and the mind, helping one experience calmness and awareness through everyday eating.

Although mugwort is a common herb, it carries profound cultural and dietary significance in seasonal cuisine and wellness traditions. A subtle hint of mugwort fragrance is not only tasted in food but also felt in the heart—embodying the balance and wisdom that Buddhist vegetarian diet and wellness seek to achieve.

### **3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Mugwort Glutinous Rice Green Rice Balls (Qingtuan) with Red Bean**



#### **Ingredients:**

Dough (Green Skin)

200 g fresh tender mugwort leaves (艾草)

300 g glutinous rice flour

50 g rice flour (non-glutinous rice flour)

50 g wheat starch (optional, for better softness and a slightly translucent texture)

30 g white sugar

Warm water as needed

15 g vegetable oil

Filling

360 g red bean paste (about 30 g per piece)

For preventing sticking

A small amount of vegetable oil

### **Steps:**

Step 1: Prepare the Mugwort

Select fresh and tender mugwort leaves and wash thoroughly.

Bring a pot of water to a boil and add about 1 g of baking soda (optional, helps preserve green color).

Blanch the mugwort for 2–3 minutes.

Immediately transfer to cold water to cool.

Squeeze out excess water.

Step 2: Make Mugwort Paste

Place the blanched mugwort into a blender.

Add about 100 ml of water.

Blend until very smooth.

A finer paste will result in a better texture for the green rice balls.

Step 3: Prepare the Dough

In a large bowl, mix glutinous rice flour, rice flour, wheat starch, and sugar evenly.

Pour in the mugwort paste.

Gradually add warm water while stirring.

Knead into a soft, non-sticky dough.

Add vegetable oil and knead again until smooth.

Dough texture should be:

Soft and elastic

Not cracking

Not sticky

Cover with a damp cloth and rest for 15 minutes.

#### Step 4: Prepare the Filling

Divide red bean paste into 12 equal portions.

Each portion should be about 30 g.

Roll into balls and set aside.

#### Step 5: Shape the Rice Balls

Divide the dough into 12 equal portions (about 50 g each).

Flatten each piece into a round disc.

Place one portion of red bean paste in the center.

Carefully seal the edges.

Roll into a smooth ball.

#### Step 6: Steaming

Line the steamer with steaming paper or bamboo leaves.

Place the rice balls in the steamer.

Steam over boiling water.

Steam on medium heat for 10–12 minutes.

Do not over-steam, or the shape may collapse.

#### Step 7: Brushing Oil

Let the rice balls cool slightly after steaming.

Lightly brush the surface with vegetable oil to prevent drying and cracking.