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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

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Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Form arises from the mind — A Single Thought Transforms Everything.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Chickpea

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Vegan Chickpea Salad Recipe

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 — A Single Thought Transforms Everything. In Buddhism, we often hear the saying:

“One thought leads to heaven; one thought leads to hell.”

Though simple in wording, this statement reveals one of the deepest truths of life.

Many people believe that changing one's life requires a long period of time, favorable circumstances, or external conditions. Yet the Buddha teaches us that the true direction of our lives is often determined in a single moment—in the very thought that arises right now.

One wholesome thought moves us closer to the light.

One unwholesome thought moves us closer to darkness.

One moment of awakening transforms affliction into wisdom.

One moment of delusion allows ignorance to obscure our insight.

Therefore Buddhism teaches:

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

Our external conditions often reflect our inner state, and the quality of our lives can be completely transformed through a change of heart.

The life of the Buddha himself is the perfect example of such transformation.

Before attaining enlightenment, the Buddha was Prince Siddhartha of the kingdom of Kapilavastu. He enjoyed a life of luxury and comfort within the palace walls.

Inside the palace he experienced every pleasure imaginable.

Outside the palace, however, the realities of human suffering were carefully hidden from him.

One day, the prince ventured beyond the palace and encountered four sights.\

He saw an old man.

He saw a sick person.

He saw a corpse.

And he saw a spiritual practitioner.

This event became known in Buddhist history as the Four Sights.

Upon seeing the old man, he realized that youth inevitably gives way to aging.

Upon seeing the sick person, he understood that the body is subject to illness.

Upon seeing the dead person, he awakened to the reality that all life eventually ends.

Upon seeing the spiritual seeker, he discovered the possibility of liberation.

At that very moment, his heart changed.

His focus shifted from worldly pleasure to the search for ultimate truth.

His concern expanded from personal happiness to the welfare of all living beings.

That single awakening thought opened the path that eventually led to Buddhahood.

Without that transformation, history might have remembered only another king.

Because of that transformation, humanity gained a Buddha.

From this we can see the extraordinary power of a single thought.

There is another famous story from the Buddha's time—the story of Angulimāla.

Angulimāla was originally intelligent and capable. However, after being misled by a misguided teacher, he turned to violence and became a feared murderer.

To fulfill a terrible vow, he killed many people and collected their fingers as trophies.

The entire country lived in fear of him.

One day, he decided to attack the Buddha.

Yet no matter how fast he ran, he could not catch up to the Buddha, who continued walking calmly and steadily ahead.

Finally, Angulimāla shouted:

“Stop, monk!”

The Buddha replied calmly:

“I have already stopped. It is you who have not stopped.”

Angulimāla was confused.

The Buddha explained:

“I have stopped harming living beings, but you continue to indulge in greed, hatred, and delusion.”

These words struck him like lightning piercing the darkness.

Suddenly, he awakened.

In a single moment of repentance and understanding, a man who had committed countless murders completely changed the course of his life.

He later became a monk, practiced diligently, and ultimately attained liberation.

What was the key to this transformation?

It happened in a single thought.

Therefore Buddhism teaches us never to underestimate ourselves.

Having troubles today does not mean we will always suffer.

Having flaws today does not mean we cannot improve.

Feeling lost today does not mean there is no hope for tomorrow.

As long as we are willing to change, a single thought can open an entirely new path.

In daily life, we are often trapped by our own thoughts.

Some people suffer for years because of a single criticism.

Some lose confidence because of one failure.

Some remain attached to minor gains and losses.

Some cling to old grievances for decades.

In truth, what imprisons us is often not the situation itself but our attachment to it.

The same event can produce completely different experiences in different people.

One person sees difficulties as opportunities for growth.

Another sees them as disasters.

One person treats criticism as a chance to improve.

Another views it as a personal attack.

Why are their experiences so different?

Because their minds are different.

The Buddha once used an analogy.

Two people look up at the same night sky.

One sees only endless darkness.

The other sees countless shining stars.

The sky has not changed.

What differs is the observer's mind.

Life is the same.

When the heart is filled with complaints, obstacles appear everywhere.

When the heart is filled with gratitude, opportunities and blessings appear everywhere.

When the heart is filled with resentment, the world seems hostile.

When the heart is filled with compassion, the world becomes warm and gentle.

For this reason, Buddhism emphasizes transforming the mind rather than blaming circumstances.

Changing the environment is often difficult.

Changing ourselves can begin immediately.

There is a story of a lay practitioner who complained to a Dharma teacher:

“Master, my family life is difficult, my work is difficult, and my relationships are difficult.”

The teacher asked:

“What do you think about most each day?”

The practitioner replied:

“I worry, complain, and become angry.”

The teacher smiled and said:

“If you plant thorns every day, how can you expect to harvest flowers?”

This is a lesson worth reflecting upon.

Our minds are like fields.

Plant compassion, and reap peace.

Plant gratitude, and reap happiness.

Plant tolerance, and reap harmony.

Plant wisdom, and reap freedom.

But if we plant greed, anger, and jealousy, we can only harvest suffering and distress.

The Sixth Patriarch Huineng taught:

“The previous thought deluded is an ordinary being; the next thought awakened is a Buddha.”

Though simple, these words reveal the essence of spiritual practice.

How far is a Buddha from an ordinary person?

Not millions of miles away.

The distance is only a single thought.

One moment of attachment gives rise to suffering.

One moment of letting go brings freedom.

One moment of hatred creates hell.

One moment of compassion creates a Pure Land.

Therefore practice is not merely about becoming a Buddha in some distant future.

It is about transforming the mind in each present moment.

Complain a little less.

Practice more gratitude.

Calculate less.

Show more understanding.

Be less self-centered.

Help others more.

Worry less.

Cultivate greater mindfulness.

These changes may seem small, but accumulated over time, they become profound transformations.

Ancient masters taught:

“When the mind changes, circumstances change; when circumstances change, blessings arise.”

The greatest victory is not conquering others but overcoming one's own afflictions.

The greatest wisdom is not changing the world but changing one's own heart.

The greatest blessing is not possessing much but learning how to let go.

Dear Dharma friends,

On the journey of life, we will inevitably encounter hardships and setbacks.

But remember:

It is not necessarily adversity that imprisons us.

What truly imprisons us is an unwillingness to change.

When we are willing to transform ourselves, everything can change.

In a single thought, darkness can become light.

In a single thought, suffering can become wisdom.

In a single thought, pain can become growth.

In a single thought, life can open into an entirely new realm.

May we all follow the Buddha's teachings, continually observing our thoughts and intentions, and treasure every moment of goodness and awakening.

May our minds become ever purer.

May our appearance become ever more dignified.

May our lives become ever brighter.

Let us conclude with these words:

One thought of compassion gives rise to a Pure Land;

One thought of wisdom illuminates the ten directions.

When the mind transforms, heaven and earth become vast;

On the path of enlightenment, light shines everywhere.

May all of you guard your minds well, transform delusion into awakening, transcend suffering, attain happiness, and together realize enlightenment.

Amitabha Buddha!

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Chickpea

Chickpeas are a highly valued ingredient in plant-based and Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, appreciated for their simplicity, nourishment, and versatility. In Buddhist dietary practice, food is ideally natural, non-harmful, and eaten with mindfulness. Chickpeas fit well within this philosophy as a pure plant food that supports both physical well-being and balanced living.

Chickpeas are rich in plant-based protein and dietary fiber, making them an excellent source of sustained energy in a vegetarian diet. They help promote satiety, support digestive health, and contribute to overall nutritional balance without relying on animal products. Because of these qualities, chickpeas are often used as a staple ingredient in salads, soups, stews, and traditional vegetarian dishes.

From a wellness perspective, chickpeas provide essential nutrients such as iron, magnesium, potassium, and folate. These nutrients play important roles in maintaining healthy blood circulation, muscle function, and metabolic balance. Their slow-digesting carbohydrates also help stabilize energy levels, making them suitable for mindful eating practices that emphasize moderation and steadiness.

In Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, chickpeas are not only valued for their nutrition but also for their alignment with ethical eating principles. As a plant-based food, they support a diet that avoids harm to sentient beings while encouraging gratitude toward nature's offerings. Eating chickpeas mindfully—chewing slowly and appreciating the food—can transform a simple meal into a practice of awareness and inner calm.

Whether used in a simple chickpea salad, a warm stew, or a light soup, chickpeas embody the essence of Buddhist diet health: natural, nourishing, and balanced. They remind us that wholesome food does not need to be elaborate to support both body and mind.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Vegan Chickpea Salad Recipe



Ingredients:

300 g cooked chickpeas (canned or pre-boiled)

1 cucumber

8–10 cherry tomatoes

50 g corn kernels

1 avocado (optional)

Add-ons

Fresh cilantro or parsley, as needed

1–2 tbsp roasted sesame seeds or pumpkin seeds

Dressing

2 tbsp olive oil

1.5 tbsp lemon juice

A pinch of salt

A pinch of black pepper

1 tsp maple syrup (or honey, optional for non-strict vegan use)

Steps:

Step 1: Prepare the Chickpeas

If using dried chickpeas: soak for 8–12 hours, then cook until soft.

If using canned chickpeas: drain and rinse thoroughly.

Step 2: Prepare the Vegetables

Dice the cucumber.

Halve the cherry tomatoes.

Cut the avocado into cubes (optional).

Chop cilantro or parsley.

Step 3: Combine the Salad

Place chickpeas in a large bowl.

Add all prepared vegetables.

Add corn kernels and seeds.

Step 4: Make the Dressing

Mix olive oil, lemon juice, salt, black pepper, and maple syrup until well combined.

Step 5: Toss the Salad

Pour the dressing over the salad.

Gently toss until all ingredients are evenly coated.