

Date: 07/04/2026 07/05/2026

Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Dharma arises from the mind — All Phenomena Are Created by the Mind

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Wood Ear Mushrooms

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Vegetarian Tomato and Potato Soup

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: Today, we will reflect on the theme "Dharma arises from the mind — All Phenomena Are Created by the Mind." This is one of the most profound and essential teachings of Buddhism.

Every day we engage in Buddhist practice—we chant the Buddha's name, recite sutras, bow before the Buddha, practice generosity, and release lives. Yet if we do not truly understand what it means that "the Dharma arises from the mind," our practice can easily remain an external ritual without transforming our hearts.

The Buddha never taught us to begin by changing other people. Instead, He taught us to transform our own minds. Nor did He ask us to change the world first; rather, He instructed us to purify our own hearts. This is because all goodness and evil, happiness and suffering, gain and loss ultimately arise from the condition of the mind.

The Dhammapada opens with these well-known verses:

"Mind precedes all phenomena; mind is their chief; they are all mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox. Mind precedes all phenomena; mind is their chief; they are all mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows like a shadow that never leaves."

These verses are regarded as one of the fundamental principles of Buddhist cultivation.

The Buddha teaches us that every action begins with an intention, and every intention originates in the mind. When the mind is filled with greed, anger, jealousy, and ignorance, suffering naturally follows. When the mind is pure, compassionate, and kind, peace and joy accompany us just as faithfully as our own shadow.

Therefore, the true path of Buddhist practice begins with cultivating the mind.

What Does "The Dharma Arises from the Mind" Mean?

Many people think that the word Dharma refers only to Buddhist scriptures, monastic rules, or temples.

In Buddhism, however, the meaning of Dharma is far broader. It refers to all phenomena, everything that exists or can be experienced.

Mountains and rivers are Dharma. Families and careers are Dharma. Happiness and sorrow are Dharma. Every physical object, every thought, every emotion, and every condition of life belongs to the realm of Dharma.

Why, then, do we say that the Dharma arises from the mind?

Because the same external situation can produce completely different experiences for different people.

One person loses a job and believes life has come to an end. Another loses the same job and discovers a career that is far more meaningful.

One person receives criticism and carries resentment for years. Another accepts the same criticism as an opportunity for growth.

The situation itself has not changed.

What has changed is the mind.

Buddhism therefore teaches us that it is not the world that determines our suffering; rather, it is the way our mind relates to the world.

The Buddha taught:

"When the mind is pure, the Buddha-land is pure."

The external world often reflects the state of our own hearts.

When the mind is troubled, everyone appears difficult and everything seems unpleasant.

When the mind is filled with compassion, we begin to understand that every person is carrying burdens and suffering of their own.

For this reason, genuine practice does not begin by changing others. It begins by transforming ourselves.

The Story of Venerable Āṅgulimāla

During the Buddha's lifetime, there lived a man feared throughout the kingdom. His name was Āṅgulimāla, which means "Garland of Fingers."

Āṅgulimāla was not born a murderer. He was once a bright, hardworking student with great potential. However, because he was misled by his teacher and driven by jealousy and resentment, his mind gradually became consumed by hatred. He was deceived into believing that killing one thousand people would bring him the highest spiritual attainment.

Blinded by this delusion, he began murdering innocent people. After each killing, he took one finger from the victim and strung them together into a garland, giving rise to the name Aṅgulimāla. The entire kingdom lived in fear, and no one dared approach him.

While everyone else avoided him, the Buddha walked calmly toward him alone.

The disciples pleaded with the Buddha not to go because it was too dangerous. The Buddha simply replied, "I know."

When Aṅgulimāla saw the Buddha, he rushed forward with his sword. Yet no matter how fast he ran, he could not catch the Buddha, who continued walking peacefully.

Finally, he shouted,

"Stop, monk!"

The Buddha turned around and gently replied,

"I have already stopped. It is you who have not stopped."

Confused, Aṅgulimāla asked,

"You are still walking. How can You say You have stopped?"

The Buddha answered,

"I have stopped harming living beings. I have abandoned greed, hatred, and delusion. But your mind continues to run after anger, violence, and craving. It is your mind that has not stopped."

These words awakened Aṅgulimāla instantly.

He realized that the true problem was not his footsteps, but the restless and deluded mind within. The greatest enemy was not outside himself, but the greed, hatred, and ignorance in his own heart.

He laid down his weapon, knelt before the Buddha, and asked to become a monk. Through sincere practice, he eventually attained Arhatship.

This story teaches us that true transformation begins not with changing our circumstances, but with changing our minds.

To "lay down the knife" means more than putting aside a weapon—it means letting go of hatred, attachment, and ignorance.

The Buddha did not conquer Aṅgulimāla through force. He transformed him through wisdom and compassion.

That is the meaning of "The Dharma arises from the mind."

The Avataṃsaka Sūtra (Huayan Sūtra) teaches:

"One should contemplate the nature of the Dharma Realm: all phenomena are created by the mind."

This does not mean that the mind literally creates the universe. Rather, it means that the way we experience the world depends on the condition of our mind.

The same spring rain may bring joy to one person and inconvenience to another. The same full moon may remind one person of reunion, while another feels loneliness.

The rain has not changed.

The moon has not changed.

What has changed is the mind.

The purpose of Buddhist practice is not to change the world, but to transform our own minds.

When the mind is filled with greed, no amount of wealth is ever enough.

When the mind is filled with jealousy, no success can bring lasting happiness.

But when the mind is filled with compassion and wisdom, even an ordinary life becomes peaceful and joyful.

In the end, all Buddhist practice comes back to cultivating this one mind.

When the mind is pure, the Dharma is revealed.

When the mind is at peace, the world becomes peaceful.

Namo Amitābha Buddha.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Wood Ear Mushrooms

Wood ear mushrooms, also known as black fungus, have long been a valued ingredient in Buddhist vegetarian cuisine. Their crisp texture, mild flavor, and remarkable ability to absorb seasonings make them a versatile addition to soups, stir-fries, salads, and braised dishes. Beyond their culinary appeal, wood ear mushrooms are appreciated for their nutritional value and are often included in balanced, plant-based meals.

In Buddhist vegetarian cooking, food is prepared with an emphasis on simplicity, mindfulness, and compassion. Ingredients are selected not only for their flavor but also for their ability to nourish the body while supporting a peaceful and balanced lifestyle. Wood ear mushrooms fit these principles well because they are naturally low in calories and fat while providing dietary fiber and beneficial minerals such as iron and potassium. They also contain naturally occurring polysaccharides and antioxidants that contribute to overall health.

The high fiber content of wood ear mushrooms may help support healthy digestion and promote a feeling of fullness after meals. Their low calorie content makes them suitable for those seeking to maintain a healthy weight without sacrificing satisfying textures in their meals. While some studies suggest that compounds in wood ear mushrooms may support heart health and healthy blood sugar levels, they should be enjoyed as part of a varied, balanced diet rather than viewed as a medicinal food.

Wood ear mushrooms demonstrate how a humble ingredient can support both good nutrition and mindful eating. Their combination of pleasant texture, culinary versatility, and nutritional benefits makes them a valuable part of Buddhist vegetarian cuisine. When enjoyed alongside a variety of vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds, they contribute to a wholesome diet that reflects the Buddhist values of moderation, gratitude, and respect for all living beings.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Stir-Fried Broccoli with Carrots and Wood Ear Mushrooms



Ingredients:

1 head of broccoli

1 carrot

1 handful dried wood ear mushrooms (black fungus), soaked until rehydrated

1 tbsp soy sauce

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper (optional)

1–2 tsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp water (optional, for a light slurry)

Cooking oil

Steps:

1. Prepare the ingredients

Soak the dried wood ear mushrooms until fully rehydrated, then rinse well and drain.

Wash the broccoli and cut it into bite-sized florets.

Peel and thinly slice the carrot.

2. Blanch the broccoli

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add a pinch of salt and a few drops of oil.

Add the broccoli and blanch for about 1 minute. If you prefer softer broccoli, cook until the water comes back to a boil, then remove.

Drain and set aside.

3. Mix the sauce

In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, salt, and black pepper.

4. Stir-fry

Heat a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat and add a little oil.

Add the carrot slices first and stir-fry until they begin to soften.

Add the soaked wood ear mushrooms and cook for another minute.

Add the blanched broccoli, then pour in the prepared sauce.

Toss everything together until the vegetables are evenly coated.

5. Optional: Thicken the sauce

If desired, stir in the cornstarch slurry and cook for 30–60 seconds until the sauce lightly coats the vegetables.

6. Serve

Transfer to a serving plate and enjoy immediately with steamed rice.