

Date: 07/18/2026 07/19/2026

Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Dharma arises from the mind — Transforming Afflictions into Bodhi.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Rice vinegar

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Japanese Pickled Vegetables

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: Dharma arises from the mind — Transforming Afflictions into Bodhi.

Everyone experiences difficulties in life. We encounter disappointment, anger, fear, jealousy, loss, and frustration. In Buddhism, these are called afflictions (kleśas).

Many people think that spiritual practice means escaping afflictions. The Buddha, however, taught us something much deeper: afflictions themselves can become the path to awakening—if we know how to transform them.

The Avataṃsaka Sūtra (Huayan Sūtra) teaches that all phenomena arise through causes and conditions and that wisdom can be discovered within every experience. Obstacles are not necessarily barriers to enlightenment; they can become the very conditions for awakening when approached with wisdom.

The question is not whether difficulties arise.

The question is: How do we respond to them?

The Story of Aṅgulimāla

One of the most powerful examples is the story of Venerable Aṅgulimāla.

Once feared as a ruthless murderer, he was consumed by hatred and delusion. Yet after meeting the Buddha, his life changed completely.

The Buddha did not reject him because of his past.

Instead, He awakened the goodness that still existed within him.

When Aṅgulimāla sincerely repented and devoted himself to practice, he eventually attained Arhatship.

His story reminds us that no one is permanently defined by their past.

Hatred can become compassion.

Violence can become kindness.

Ignorance can become wisdom.

When the mind changes, life changes.

This is the true meaning of transforming affliction into Bodhi.

The Story of Devadatta

Another important example is Devadatta, the Buddha's cousin.

Unlike Aṅgulimāla, Devadatta allowed jealousy and ambition to dominate his heart. He sought fame and power, attempted to divide the Sangha, and even tried to harm the Buddha.

From an ordinary perspective, Devadatta appears only as an enemy of Buddhism.

Yet the Buddha never responded with hatred.

Instead, He treated Devadatta with patience and compassion.

The Buddha understood that Devadatta's harmful actions arose from ignorance and attachment.

Rather than allowing resentment to arise, the Buddha used every challenge as an opportunity to deepen compassion, patience, and wisdom.

For practitioners, this is an important lesson.

Sometimes the people who challenge us become our greatest teachers.

Without criticism, we cannot develop humility.

Without difficulties, we cannot cultivate patience.

Without adversity, our wisdom remains untested.

Even unpleasant conditions can become part of the path.

Afflictions Are the Soil of Wisdom

Imagine a lotus flower.

The lotus does not grow in clean water alone.

It grows from the mud.

Without mud, there is no lotus.

Likewise, wisdom grows through our willingness to understand and transform our afflictions.

Anger can teach us patience.

Failure can teach us humility.

Loss can teach us gratitude.

Pain can awaken compassion for others who suffer.

If we simply complain about our difficulties, afflictions become suffering.

If we examine them with mindfulness, they become opportunities for awakening.

The difference lies in the mind.

Practicing Transformation

How can we transform afflictions into Bodhi in daily life?

First, pause before reacting.

When anger arises, do not immediately speak or act.

Observe it.

Recognize it.

Allow wisdom to arise before responding.

Second, reflect instead of blaming.

Whenever conflict occurs, ask:

"What can I learn from this experience?"

Instead of changing others, begin by transforming yourself.

Third, cultivate compassion.

People who hurt others are often carrying deep suffering themselves.

Understanding this does not excuse harmful actions, but it helps prevent hatred from taking root in our own hearts.

Finally, maintain faith in your Buddha-nature.

No matter how many mistakes we have made, every person possesses the potential for awakening.

As Aṅgulimāla demonstrated, sincere repentance and diligent practice can completely transform a life.

Afflictions are not obstacles to the path.

Very often, they are the path.

Every challenge invites us to cultivate greater wisdom.

Every disappointment offers an opportunity to strengthen compassion.

Every difficulty becomes a step toward awakening when we respond with mindfulness.

Remember:

Bodhi does not arise because life is free from problems.

Bodhi arises because we learn to transform every problem with wisdom.

May we face every difficulty with courage, every conflict with compassion, and every challenge with a peaceful mind.

May all our afflictions become the conditions for awakening.

May all beings cultivate wisdom, abandon suffering, and attain perfect enlightenment.

Namo Amitābha Buddha.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Rice vinegar

In Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, seasonings are chosen for their simplicity and natural flavors rather than strong or overpowering tastes. Rice vinegar is one of the most common and gentle seasonings, enhancing the natural flavor of food while adding a refreshing touch to vegetarian dishes.

Rice vinegar is made by fermenting rice. It has a clear to light amber color, a mild acidity, and a delicate aroma of rice. Compared with stronger vinegars, rice vinegar has a smoother, more rounded flavor. It is widely used throughout Japan, China, and other parts of Asia for making salads, pickled vegetables, dipping sauces, and a variety of vegetarian dishes.

From a nutritional perspective, rice vinegar is low in calories and can add flavor to foods while helping reduce the need for excess salt and oil, supporting a lighter and healthier style of cooking. It is an essential ingredient in Japanese quick pickles (asazuke), salad dressings, and sushi rice, where its clean, balanced acidity complements fresh ingredients.

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), vinegar has a sour flavor and is traditionally believed to stimulate the appetite, promote the production of body fluids, and support healthy digestion. As with all seasonings, it is best enjoyed in moderation. Individuals who experience acid reflux or have sensitive stomachs should adjust their intake according to their personal health needs and the advice of their healthcare professional.

In Buddhist food culture, rice vinegar may seem like a simple condiment, yet it reflects the wisdom of contentment and moderation. Just a small amount is enough to bring out the natural sweetness and freshness of vegetables and grains, allowing the true flavors of the ingredients to shine without excessive seasoning.

Whether used to prepare Japanese quick pickles, fresh vegetable salads, or vegetarian sauces, rice vinegar adds a light, refreshing flavor to Buddhist vegetarian meals. A single spoonful of rice vinegar

not only enriches a dish but also reminds us to embrace a simple lifestyle, eat with gratitude, and appreciate the nourishment found in every meal.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Japanese Pickled Vegetables



Ingredients:

300 g Chinese cabbage (or cucumber, daikon radish, or green cabbage)

1 cucumber

½ carrot (optional)

1½ teaspoons salt

2 tablespoons rice vinegar

1 teaspoon sugar (optional)

One 5 cm (2-inch) piece of kombu (dried kelp) (optional)

1 tablespoon toasted white sesame seeds (optional)

1 small dried chili pepper (optional)

Steps:

1. Wash the vegetables and cut them into bite-sized pieces.
2. Place them in a large bowl, sprinkle with the salt, and toss gently to coat. Let stand for 15 minutes.
3. Gently squeeze out the excess moisture from the vegetables.
4. Add the rice vinegar, sugar, and kombu (if using), and mix well.
5. Transfer the vegetables to a resealable bag or an airtight container. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to 2 hours.
6. Before serving, sprinkle with toasted white sesame seeds.