

Date: 08/15/2026 08/16/2026

Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Virtue Arises from the Mind — Bringing the Dharma into Everyday Life

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Sweet Potato Leaves

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Sweet Potato Leaves Stir-Fry

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: Virtue Arises from the Mind — Bringing the Dharma into Everyday Life. How Can We Truly Put “Virtue Arises from the Mind” into Practice in Daily Life?

What does it really mean to put “virtue arises from the mind” into practice in our daily lives? Perhaps one of the greatest challenges in Buddhist practice is this: we are deeply sincere and reverent in the temple, yet become a completely different person once we leave. We feel peaceful while reciting sutras, but argue with our family as soon as we return home. We feel compassionate while bowing before the Buddha, yet immediately give rise to anger when we encounter someone we dislike. We listen to the Dharma and feel that every word makes perfect sense, only to forget it all when we encounter the slightest difficulty the next day. This is why the true examination ground of Buddhism is not the Buddha hall, but everyday life. Our family is our place of practice. Our workplace is our place of practice. Our relationships with others are our place of practice. Even our afflictions themselves are our place of practice.

Why did the Buddha teach the Dharma in this world? Because the suffering of sentient beings exists in this world. If Buddhism can only give us a moment of peace when everything is quiet, but cannot help us face the conflicts and difficulties of everyday life, then the Dharma has not yet truly entered our lives. The Buddha taught his disciples not only to meditate and recite sutras, but also placed great importance on our conduct in daily life. Body, speech, and mind—the three karmas—are the practices we engage in every single day.

The body refers to our actions; speech refers to our words; and mind refers to our thoughts. Yet at the very root of all three is the mind. A single thought can give rise to a spoken word; a spoken word can lead to an action; an action repeated again and again becomes a habit; and over time, our habits shape our character and ultimately our lives.

Therefore, when we say “virtue arises from the mind,” genuine practice can begin in three areas: guarding our thoughts, guarding our speech, and guarding our actions. First, guard your thoughts. When you see someone doing better than you, do not immediately give rise to jealousy. When you see someone fail, do not take pleasure in their misfortune.

When things do not go as planned, do not immediately assume, “Everyone is against me.” Stop for a moment. Ask yourself, “What is happening within my mind right now?” This simple awareness is

extremely important. The Buddha taught “right mindfulness,” which enables us to clearly observe the state of our body and mind. Second, guard your speech.

The Dhammapada contains many teachings concerning the power of speech. We speak many words every day, yet often it is just one sentence that can cause the deepest harm. One cruel remark can remain in someone’s memory for many years. One word of encouragement, however, can give someone the strength to begin again. So before we speak, we can give ourselves one more choice: Is what I am about to say true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? If it is not necessary, perhaps we should simply say less. And if it must be said, then let us say it with as much compassion as possible. This does not mean that we can never criticize others. Rather, when we point out a mistake, we should not confuse the wrong action with the dignity of the person.

For example, if a child performs poorly on an exam, we can say, “This time the exam did not go well. Let’s see where the problems are.” We should not casually say, “You’re just stupid.” The first statement addresses the problem. The second attacks the person’s dignity. The same is true for adults. If someone makes a mistake at work, pointing out the problem can help that person grow. But if we use the opportunity to humiliate or ridicule them, that is no longer wisdom; it is anger and resentment.

During the Buddha’s lifetime, there was a very well-known disciple named Venerable Ananda. Ananda was the Buddha’s cousin and served as his attendant during the later years of the Buddha’s life, accompanying him and listening to the Dharma for many years. One of Ananda’s most important qualities was his extensive learning and remarkable memory. He was able to remember many of the Buddha’s teachings. Therefore, after the Buddha entered final Nirvana, when the first Buddhist council was held to compile and preserve the teachings, Venerable Ananda played a crucial role in reciting and preserving the sutras.

This reminds us of an important principle: hearing and learning the Dharma is very important, but remembering the Dharma is only the first step. What truly matters is putting it into practice. We can remember many famous passages from the Buddhist scriptures. But if we never apply even one of them to our daily lives, then the Dharma remains only knowledge. For example, we all know about “patience and forbearance.” But when someone truly criticizes us, can we remain patient? We all know about “compassion.” But when we face someone we dislike, can we still respond with compassion? We all know about “letting go.” But when our interests come into conflict with someone else’s, can we let go of some of our attachment? This is where the Dharma becomes real.

That is why there is a very important saying in Buddhist practice: “Practice means transforming yourself, not changing others.” It is so easy for us to see other people’s problems. We see our husband’s problems. We see our wife’s problems. We see our children’s problems. We see our neighbors’ problems. We see our coworkers’ problems. We may even see the problems of other Buddhist practitioners.

But Buddhism tells us to turn our attention back toward ourselves. Has my greed decreased today? Has my temper become less severe? Have my words become gentler? Am I more willing to forgive others than I was in the past? Am I more willing to help others than before? If the answer is yes, then we are making progress. Even if we improve only a little each day, that is still genuine spiritual practice.

The Diamond Sutra teaches: “All conditioned phenomena are like a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow, like dew or lightning; thus should they be regarded.” Many of the things in life will eventually pass. The things we argue about so passionately today may no longer seem important ten years from

now. The words we cling to so tightly today may be things we cannot even remember a few years later. If everything is impermanent, why carry so much resentment in our hearts? Why not let go of a little more right now? Why not treat the people around us with a little more kindness while we still can? Why not spend a little more time talking with our parents while they are still with us? Why not give our children a little more patience while they still need us? Why not cherish our friends a little more while they are still by our side? Buddhism does not ask us to turn away from life. Rather, it teaches us to appreciate life more deeply. Therefore, when we say “virtue arises from the mind,” ultimately, it must come down to one word: practice.

If there is compassion in your heart, then go and help someone. If there is gratitude in your heart, then say “thank you.” If there is remorse in your heart, then offer a sincere apology. If there is a sincere aspiration in your heart, then persist in doing good. If the Dharma lives within your heart, then let yourself become someone who brings peace and a sense of security to others.

Within your family, be someone who brings warmth to those you love; at work, be someone others can trust; among others, be someone who does not easily cause harm; in times of difficulty, be someone who does not lose the intention to do good; and when no one is watching, still hold firmly to your conscience. This is virtue.

Virtue is not something we merely talk about. Virtue is the sense of peace and security that others feel after spending time with us. A virtuous person does not necessarily have great wealth, nor do they necessarily have great fame. Yet wherever they go, people feel that they are reliable. Their words bring peace to others. Their actions inspire trust. When interests are involved, they do not fight excessively for their own share. When conflicts arise, they do not easily hurt others. When they see someone in difficulty, they are willing to lend a hand. When they see others succeed, they can sincerely rejoice for them. Such a person is practicing the Dharma through the way they live.

Amitabha Buddha!

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Sweet Potato Leaves

In temple vegetarian cuisine, sweet potato leaves (also known as sweet potato greens) are a traditional vegetable full of natural character. They grow in a simple and humble way, without seeking extravagance, yet they are appreciated for their fresh flavor and rich nutritional value. Sweet potato leaves are often prepared with simple cooking methods, reflecting the temple vegetarian philosophy of “light, natural, authentic flavor, and mindful appreciation of food.”

Sweet potato leaves are not only a common everyday vegetable but also align with modern plant-based dietary principles. They contain a variety of nutrients, and moderate consumption can enrich the diet while providing natural nourishment for the body.

1. Refreshing Nourishment — A Source of Green Plant Nutrition

With their vibrant green color, sweet potato leaves are rich in natural plant nutrients. In traditional wellness practices, green vegetables are considered fresh, nourishing foods that are suitable for daily meals.

Sweet potato leaves contain:

Dietary fiber

Vitamin A-related nutrients (such as beta-carotene)
Vitamin C
Chlorophyll
Various minerals

These nutrients help support normal body functions and are an important part of a balanced diet.

2. Supporting Digestion — A Valuable Source of Dietary Fiber

Sweet potato leaves contain a good amount of dietary fiber, making them an excellent vegetable choice in a plant-based diet.

Adequate dietary fiber intake may help:

Support normal digestive function

Increase feelings of fullness after meals

Provide nutrients that support a healthy intestinal environment

Temple vegetarian cuisine emphasizes balance and moderation. With their light and refreshing nature, sweet potato leaves fit well into a mindful and wellness-oriented diet.

3. Antioxidant Support — Natural Plant-Based Compounds

From a modern nutritional perspective, sweet potato leaves contain various plant compounds, including polyphenols and carotenoids.

These natural compounds have antioxidant properties and may help the body manage oxidative stress and support cellular health.

As part of a daily plant-based diet, sweet potato leaves provide an additional source of beneficial natural plant compounds.

4. Supporting Eye and Skin Health — Vitamin A-Related Nutrition

The beta-carotene found in sweet potato leaves can be converted into vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A plays an important role in:

Maintaining normal vision

Supporting skin health

Supporting normal immune system function

Including a variety of colorful vegetables in the diet can help provide a wider range of plant-based nutrients.

5. Providing Minerals — Supporting Body Balance

Sweet potato leaves contain various minerals, including:

Calcium
Potassium
Magnesium

These minerals participate in many important physiological processes and contribute to maintaining normal body functions.

In temple vegetarian cuisine, sweet potato leaves are often combined with tofu products, mushrooms, grains, and other plant-based ingredients to create a more balanced and nourishing diet.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Sweet Potato Leaves Stir-Fry



Ingredients:

Fresh sweet potato leaves (sweet potato greens): 500 g
Julienned ginger: an appropriate amount
Thinly sliced red chili: a small amount (optional)
Vegetable oil: 1–2 tablespoons
Salt: to taste
Light soy sauce: 1 teaspoon (optional)
Sesame oil: a small amount
White pepper powder: a small amount (optional)

Preparation

Prepare the Sweet Potato Leaves

Remove older stems and any yellow or wilted leaves.

Separate the tender leaves from the young stems.

Rinse thoroughly with clean water, soak for 10 minutes, then drain well.

For thicker stems, gently peel off the outer skin to make them more tender and easier to eat.

Steps:

1: Sauté the Aromatics

Heat a wok or frying pan.

Add vegetable oil.

Add the ginger strips and stir-fry briefly until fragrant.

2: Stir-Fry the Sweet Potato Leaves

Add the thicker stems first and stir-fry over high heat for about 30 seconds.

Add the tender leaves.

Stir-fry quickly for 1–2 minutes until the leaves are softened while maintaining their bright green color.

3: Season and Serve

Add salt to taste.

Add a small amount of light soy sauce if a richer savory flavor is desired.

Drizzle with a little sesame oil.

Toss well and turn off the heat immediately.