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Location: Double Saltree Meditation Center

Teacher: Hao Liu

Topics:

1: Dharma Talk: Śīla arises from the mind, circumstances change with the mind.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Chow Fun (Rice noodles)

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Vegetarian Stir-Fried Chow Fun (Rice noodles)

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: Śīla arises from the mind, circumstances change with the mind.

As life unfolds, we eventually come to realize that what truly determines the direction of our lives is often not the external environment, but our own mind.

The same rain can make one person feel disappointed, while another finds it refreshing. The same criticism may cause one person to feel resentment, while another takes it as an opportunity for self-reflection. The same setback may cause one person to lose heart, while another awakens because of it.

The event itself remains the same. Why, then, do people experience it so differently?

Because although the circumstances may be the same, the mind is not.

The Dhammapada says: “The mind is the forerunner of all things; the mind is chief, and all things are shaped by the mind.” It also teaches that when an unwholesome thought arises in the mind, our words and actions tend to follow that thought, and suffering follows as its consequence. When a wholesome thought arises, our words and actions likewise become wholesome, and happiness follows like a shadow.

The Buddha was not telling us that every misfortune in life is something we have simply “thought into existence.” Rather, he was teaching us that when we encounter circumstances, the attitude we take in our minds will further shape our words and actions, and consequently the results that arise from them.

This is at the heart of the Buddhist teaching of karma.

Suppose someone insults us. If our first response is anger, that anger may lead to an argument. The argument may create resentment, and resentment, when it continues for a long time, may gradually drive people apart.

But if, when the same thing happens, we can first pause and observe the thought arising within us—“Why am I so angry?”—we may discover that what truly causes our suffering is not merely what the other person has said, but our own attachment to the idea, “I must not be looked down upon.”

Once this thought is seen clearly, the mind has an opportunity to turn.

The Buddha also taught in the Dhammapada: “Do not blame others; examine yourself.”

When people encounter difficulties, one of the easiest things to do is to look for someone else to blame:

“It was all his fault.”

“If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be like this.”

“The circumstances were simply too difficult.”

But Buddhism invites us to turn our attention back toward ourselves.

This does not mean excusing others, nor does it mean passively enduring harm. Rather, we ask ourselves:

What is the state of my mind right now?

Is it greed? Anger? Jealousy? Hurt? Pride?

Or can I maintain even a small measure of clarity and compassion?

This is where genuine practice begins.

There is a well-known story in Buddhism.

The Buddha once encountered a man who hurled insults and harsh words at him. The man said many unpleasant things, but the Buddha quietly listened and did not respond with anger.

Finally, the Buddha asked him, “If someone gives you a gift and you do not accept it, to whom does the gift belong?”

The man replied, “Of course, it still belongs to the person who gave it.”

The Buddha then said, “In the same way, I do not accept your abusive words. To whom, then, do those words belong?”

The story teaches us more than simply “endurance.” At a deeper level, it teaches us not to turn another person's turmoil into our own.

Others may give rise to anger in their own minds; whether we allow that anger to arise in our own mind is our choice.

Therefore, genuine spiritual practice is not about making the world outside us forever conform to our wishes. It is about maintaining clarity within ourselves even when the world does not go according to our expectations.

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch says: “Originally, the nature is pure; by using this mind directly, one realizes Buddhahood.” It also records that the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng, experienced a profound awakening upon hearing the words from the Diamond Sutra: “Let the mind arise without abiding anywhere.”

What does it mean to “not abide”?

It means that the mind can encounter everything without becoming tightly attached to anything.

When others praise you, you need not become intoxicated with pride.

When others criticize or slander you, you need not hold resentment in your heart.

When you gain something, you need not become wildly elated.

When you lose something, you need not fall into despair.

This does not mean having no emotions. It means not allowing emotions to control you.

It does not mean having no troubles. It means being able to see your troubles clearly.

It does not mean having no adversity. It means being able to hold on to the clarity of your mind even in the midst of adversity.

This is the deeper meaning of “The Way arises from the mind.”

The true “Way” is found in a single thought, in a single moment.

One thought of compassion leads toward compassion.

One thought of anger leads toward anger.

One moment of awareness begins to lead toward awakening.

Therefore, what we truly need to change in life is sometimes not the environment around us, but the mind with which we see and experience that environment.

When the mind becomes a little more peaceful, life becomes a little more peaceful.

When the mind becomes a little more free, life becomes a little more free.

Spiritual practice is not somewhere far away.

The Way is right here, in this very moment, within this very mind.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Chow Fun (Rice noodles)

A delicate fragrance of rice, a sense of purity; nourishing through plant-based food, and nourishing the spirit through mindful eating.

Rice noodles are made primarily from rice through traditional processes such as grinding and steaming. Soft, smooth, and pleasantly chewy, they have a naturally mild flavor and represent a simple and wholesome form of traditional rice-based cuisine.

Nutritional Value of Rice Noodles

Rice as the Foundation — A Source of Energy

Rice is rich in carbohydrates, which are an important source of energy for everyday activities. With their soft and smooth texture, rice noodles pair naturally with beans, vegetables, and other plant-based ingredients to create a more balanced meal.

Rice noodles are primarily composed of carbohydrates and can provide energy for daily activities, making them one of the many grain-based food choices in a balanced diet.

Mild in Flavor — Easy to Pair with Nutritious Ingredients

Rice noodles have a naturally mild flavor and can be paired with tofu and other soy products, mushrooms, bean sprouts, and a variety of fresh vegetables. This combination brings together grains, plant-based protein, and vegetables, creating a more diverse and nourishing meal.

Simple Ingredients — A Return to Natural Flavor

Made from rice as the primary ingredient, rice noodles do not require complicated preparation or heavy seasoning. When combined with moderate amounts of healthy oils and natural plant-based ingredients, they offer a light, refreshing, and wholesome vegetarian flavor.

Simple food, natural nourishment;

a clean meal for the body, and a peaceful moment for the mind.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Vegetarian Stir-Fried Chow Fun (Rice noodles)



Ingredients:

400 g fresh wide rice noodles

150 g bean sprouts

100 g firm tofu or dried tofu, cut into strips

2–3 tbsp cooking oil

Sauce

1½ tbsp light soy sauce

1 tsp dark soy sauce

½ tsp sugar

A pinch of white pepper

½ tsp sesame oil

Steps:

1. Prepare the rice noodles

Gently separate the fresh rice noodles if they are sticking together. Do not soak them for too long, or they may become too soft and break easily while stir-frying.

2. Make the sauce

Mix the light soy sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, white pepper, and sesame oil in a small bowl. Set aside.

3. Pan-fry the tofu

Heat a wok over medium-high heat. Add a little oil and pan-fry the tofu until lightly browned on both sides. Remove and set aside.

4. Stir-fry the aromatics

Heat the wok until very hot. Add the oil

Add the rice noodles and stir-fry quickly over high heat. Gently push and toss the noodles with a spatula rather than stirring them too aggressively, so they don't break.

5. Add the sauce

Pour the sauce around the edge of the hot wok and quickly toss everything together until the noodles are evenly coated.

6. Add the vegetables and tofu

Add the bean sprouts, tofu. Stir-fry over high heat for about 1 minute, keeping the bean sprouts slightly crisp.

7. Serve

Taste and adjust the seasoning with a little more soy sauce or white pepper if needed. Turn off the heat and serve immediately.