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Topics:
1: Dharma Talk: Samādhi arises from the mind — The Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi
2: Buddhist Diet Health: Water Fern
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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: Samādhi arises from the mind — The Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi. The "samādhi" spoken of in Buddhism has different levels. For beginners, cultivating samādhi often means calming a scattered and restless mind. As practice deepens, one gradually comes to recognize one's own thoughts, emotions, and attachments. The Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi spoken of in Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, is not simply the pursuit of a quiet state while sitting in meditation. Rather, it involves recognizing the fundamental nature of awareness, so that the mind is no longer constantly turning and changing along with every arising and passing circumstance. Thus, at a deeper level, "stillness arises from the mind" does not mean obtaining samādhi from outside oneself, but rather realizing one's original mind through practice, allowing the innate clarity and awareness to gradually reveal themselves.

What ordinary people call "my mind" is often nothing more than their thoughts, emotions, and discriminating consciousness. When we are happy today, we assume that this is our mind; when we are troubled tomorrow, we again assume that this is our mind. When a thought arises, we naturally think, "This is what I think." Yet when we observe carefully, we discover that thoughts are constantly changing, emotions are constantly changing, and the body is also constantly changing. If all these constantly changing things were truly the "self," then this "self" would always remain in a state of change. One of the deeper meanings of the Śūraṅgama Sūtra is to guide practitioners to investigate further: although these thoughts continuously arise and cease, who is it that knows these thoughts?

This brings us to the question of awareness. We know when we are happy, and we know when we are angry. We know when a thought arises, and we also know when that thought disappears. Thoughts are objects that are seen and observed, while cultivation is the gradual process of turning away from constantly chasing after thoughts and toward observing the mind that is capable of knowing those thoughts. In the past, our minds were constantly pursuing external objects; now, we begin to turn inward and illuminate our own minds. This movement from "following external phenomena" to "turning inward to observe" is an important direction for understanding the practice taught in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra.

The practice described by Guanyin Bodhisattva in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, known as "turning hearing inward to hear one's own inherent nature," is also a very important method of cultivation. Ordinarily, when we hear a sound, we immediately follow it with discrimination: this is a pleasant sound, that is an unpleasant sound; this is praise, that is criticism. As soon as a sound arises, the mind immediately

follows it. Turning hearing inward does not mean making oneself unable to hear sounds. Rather, it means turning away from outwardly chasing after sounds and instead turning back to observe the very nature of hearing. In other words, although sound continues to exist, the mind is no longer completely controlled by it. This is consistent with the fundamental spirit of cultivating samādhi: circumstances may continue to exist, while the mind can remain aware and lucid.

Therefore, the Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi cannot simply be understood as "being able to sit for a long time." A person may be able to sit cross-legged for several hours, but this does not necessarily mean that they have attained genuine great samādhi. If, after leaving the meditation seat, a single sentence can make them angry or a small incident can make them distressed, then their practice still needs to deepen. True samādhi means remaining clear and awake even when circumstances arise. When favorable conditions appear, one does not become lost in them; when unfavorable conditions arise, one does not collapse into confusion. When thoughts arise, one is able to recognize them; when emotions arise, one is able to see them. This capacity not to be easily turned or disturbed by external circumstances is an important manifestation of the deepening of meditation.

The Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi is also not about pursuing some kind of mysterious experience. During practice, one may experience physical lightness, inner tranquility, joy, or various other sensations, but these experiences also arise and pass away. If one becomes attached to such experiences, one merely changes from being attached to worldly phenomena to being attached to meditative experiences. What Buddhism truly emphasizes is using meditation to develop awareness and wisdom, gradually reducing greed, anger, ignorance, and attachment to the self. Therefore, whether one's practice has truly deepened should not be judged merely by whether one experiences something extraordinary during meditation. More importantly, one should observe whether one's afflictions are diminishing in everyday life and whether the mind is becoming increasingly clear and lucid.

The so-called great samādhi does not mean that one simply does nothing. Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings inherently possess Buddha-nature and awareness, yet ordinary beings have long been obscured by ignorance and habitual tendencies, and therefore still need to practice. It is like the sun: the sun exists naturally, but when it is covered by clouds, the clouds still need to gradually disperse before the sunlight can appear clearly. Practice does not create a new form of awareness. Rather, through ethical discipline, meditation, listening to the Dharma, contemplation, and wisdom, we gradually reduce the afflictions and attachments that obscure the original mind.

From this perspective, ordinary meditation and the Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi may differ in depth, but they share a common path: both guide the mind from distraction toward stability, and from chasing after circumstances toward awareness of circumstances. At first, one may rely on methods such as mindfulness of breathing, recitation of the Buddha's name, or mantra practice to gather and settle the mind. Gradually, one observes one's thoughts and emotions. Further still, one recognizes that all thoughts and circumstances are subject to arising and passing away, and no longer regards every thought as the true self. As the mind is no longer carried away by each successive thought, awareness becomes increasingly clear.

True great samādhi must also be embodied in everyday life. When receiving praise, one can remain calm; when receiving criticism, one can first observe one's own mind; when encountering personal gain, one can recognize the arising of greed; when things do not go as desired, one can recognize the arising of anger. This does not mean demanding that oneself never experience emotions. Rather, when an emotion arises, one is able to know that it is arising without being completely controlled by it. Nor does

it mean demanding that external circumstances always be favorable. Instead, as circumstances change, the mind remains clear and awake.

Therefore, at the level of the Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi, “stillness arises from the mind” can be understood in this way: true samādhi does not mean fixing the mind upon a particular state or experience. Rather, whatever circumstances one encounters, one remains aware. When a thought arises, one knows that it has arisen; when it passes away, there is no need to chase after it. When a sound arises, one hears it without becoming lost in it; when circumstances arise, one faces them without becoming attached to them. The mind can respond according to circumstances while remaining free from bondage to them.

Therefore, the Great Śūraṅgama Samādhi is not a special state that one can display or boast about. It is a path from delusion toward awakening, and from distraction toward clarity. It reminds us that what truly needs to change is not the external world, but the mind with which we face the world. When the mind follows external circumstances, affliction can arise everywhere; when the mind remains aware and lucid, everything can become an opportunity for practice.

2: Buddhist Diet Health: Water Fern

Water fern, with its tender green leaves and delicate texture, is a wild vegetable traditionally consumed in some regions of Asia. When properly prepared and simply cooked, water fern has a fresh, crisp texture and a natural vegetal aroma. As a leafy green vegetable, water fern contains dietary fiber, vitamins, minerals, and a variety of naturally occurring plant compounds, adding diverse plant-based nutrients to a light vegetarian diet.

In Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, water fern is valued for its natural and refreshing qualities. Paired with preserved mustard greens, ginger, and other simple ingredients, and prepared by blanching or quick stir-frying, it can retain its tender texture and natural flavor while reflecting the Buddhist dietary principles of “purity, simplicity, vegetarianism, and cleanliness.”

Nutritional Value of Water Fern

Contains Dietary Fiber

As a leafy green vegetable, water fern can provide dietary fiber as part of the daily diet. Consuming a variety of plant-based foods rich in dietary fiber, such as vegetables, legumes, and whole grains, can contribute to a balanced and diverse dietary pattern.

Contains a Variety of Vitamins and Minerals

Water fern contains certain vitamins and minerals. Its actual nutritional content may vary depending on the variety, growing environment, edible portion, and cooking method. Therefore, pairing water fern with vegetables of different colors can further diversify the nutritional sources in the daily diet.

Contains Natural Plant Compounds

Water fern is a green plant that contains a variety of naturally occurring plant compounds. Consuming a diverse range of vegetables can increase the variety of plant-based nutrients in the diet and is an important part of a balanced vegetarian eating pattern.

3: Buddhist Diet Culinary: Stir-Fried Water Fern with Preserved Mustard Greens



Ingredients:

300 g water fern

50–60 g preserved mustard greens

4–5 slices fresh ginger

1 tablespoon cooking oil

1 teaspoon soy sauce (optional)

½ teaspoon granulated sugar

2–3 tablespoons water

A small amount of white pepper

½ teaspoon sesame oil (optional)

Steps:

1. Prepare the water fern

Wash the water fern thoroughly and remove any tough parts or impurities. Cut into pieces about 4–5 cm long. Bring a pot of water to a boil, add the water fern, and blanch for about 30–60 seconds. Drain, rinse immediately under cold water, and drain well.

2. Prepare the preserved mustard greens

Rinse the preserved mustard greens briefly under clean water to remove excess salt. Squeeze out the excess moisture and finely chop. If the preserved mustard greens are particularly salty, soak them in water for a few minutes before cooking.

3. Sauté the ginger

Heat a pan and add the cooking oil. Add the ginger slices and sauté over medium heat until fragrant.

4. Add the preserved mustard greens

Add the chopped preserved mustard greens and stir-fry over low heat for about 1–2 minutes, allowing their savory aroma to develop.

5. Add the water fern

Turn the heat to high. Add the blanched water fern and stir-fry quickly for about 2–3 minutes, allowing it to absorb the flavor of the preserved mustard greens.

6. Season and finish

Add a small amount of soy sauce, sugar, white pepper, and water. Stir-fry quickly until evenly combined. Since the preserved mustard greens are already salty, use very little soy sauce and do not add additional salt. Once the liquid has slightly reduced, turn off the heat. Drizzle with a small amount of sesame oil if desired.