CHAPTER TWO
ANIMALS VERSUS HUMANS: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

From a Buddhist perspective, the empathetic relationships established among humans and their pets can be seen as new contributory capacities being brought forth from both humans and animals. This does not mean that the interdependence among humans and pets is assumed to be necessarily good. Pets can be, and too often are, abused. But the benefits of pets for children and the elderly are very well-documented as are the potentials for pets to establish profound more communities with individual humans and human families. The relational repertoire of well-cared for pets is much more extensive and refined than that of either their counterparts or industrially farmed animals.¹

According to the universal law, all living beings have equal right to life in the world, all animals can have the right to be free from pain, the right to food, all other rights could be applied to animals. In nature, all animals are wild and free, but the human beings do not respect the right to life of animals. They kill and inflict injury to animals under many forms. The people do not care about the ethical and moral aspects that concern human use of animals for the purposes of food, labor, and various other needs. They make use of animals for fur, leather, wool, food, clothing, entertainment, and as research subjects. The people not only use animals for purpose of food, labor, but also in scientific experiments, hunting and trapping.²

Buddhism considers it immoral for humans to exploit animals. Over 2500 years ago, the Buddha after leaving home refused to ride an animal or travel by a vehicle driven by an animal. With the reasons above, the major portion of this chapter is devoted to the tricky issue of meat eating. We have also discussed in detail the Theravādin principle of Tikotiparisuddha, and further deal with the Mahāyāna regulations regarding vegetarian food. Thus a major element of the animal rights argument is the shared characteristics of human and other animal species.\(^3\)

**II. 1. What is an animal?**

The word “animal” comes from the Latin word *animus*, which means “breath” or “soul.” That is, an animal is an “animate” being, a thing that lives and breathes and moves, unlike a plant which is incapable of rapid motor responses.\(^4\) In everyday colloquial usage, the word usually refers to non-human animals. Frequently, only closer relatives of humans such as mammals and other vertebrates are meant in colloquial use. The biological definition of the word refers to all members of the kingdom Animalia, encompassing creatures as diverse as sponges, jellyfish, insects and humans.\(^5\)

Animals have several characteristics that set them apart from other living things. Animals are multi-cellular which separates them form bacteria and most protists. They generally digest food in an internal chamber, which

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separates them from plants and algae. They are also distinguished from plants, algae, and fungi by lacking rigid cell walls. In most animals, embroyl pass through a blastula stages, which is a characteristic exclusive to animals.6

There is a huge variety of life on earth. Nobody knows exactly how many different plants and animals there are, scientists have estimated that there are between five and thirty million species. Animal come in all shapes and size. They live in many varied habitats, from desert to rainforest. It unique species is the product of millions of years of evolution.7 According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) who was a foremost Franco-Swiss philosopher of the Enlightenment, a writer and composer of eighteenth century Romanticism mentioned in discourse on inequality that animals should be part of natural law, not because they are rational but because they are sentient. He argued that sensitivity, the capacity to experience pleasure and suffering, entitles rights. Animals being sensitive experience pain and suffering and therefore as a consequence they should have rights.8

Tom Regan argues that, because the moral rights of humans are based on their possession of certain cognitive abilities, and because these abilities are also possessed by at least some non-human animals, such animals must have the same moral rights as humans. Although only humans act as moral agents, both marginal-case humans, such as infants, and at least some non-humans must have the status of “moral patients.” Moral patients are unable to formulate moral principles, and as such are unable to do right or wrong,

6 Ibid. 58.
even though what they do may be beneficial or harmful. Only moral agents are able to engage in moral action.

II.2. What is a human being?

An interest in human nature has long been a motive driving philosophical inquiry. In the ancient world it was associated most closely with the name of Socrates and with his claim that the most valuable knowledge is self-knowledge. In the modern period a distinctive kind of philosophical thought got under way with Descartes’s attempt to show that rigorous scientific knowledge must be grounded in a new kind of self-knowledge.

An interest in human nature can take many forms, and the questions in which it finds expression can range from such matters as the character of human motivation to the prospects for human happiness. Philosophers have asked questions like these, but they have been more interested in what differentiates human beings from other living things and generally from the nature world in which they live. It has been widely agreed that if there is some respect in which human beings differ from even the higher animals, it must be their capacity for rational thought that makes the difference.⁹

Heidegger insists on the requirement that the level at which this inquiry is pitched must differ from that of the usual definitions of a human being as an animal rationale. A human being is an animal life-form that exists on planet earth. Humans are a very successful animal.¹⁰ Like other similar living organisms, human beings are made of many individual cells,

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each autonomous, which cooperate together for mutual benefit, specialize, organize into organs, and form a body that is capable of taking care of all its cells in a more sophisticated way. They have adapted to living in most parts of the world, and have increased their population to nearly six billion. Humans now dominate many other species on earth.

This is comparable to individual human beings, each fully autonomous and capable of independent function, cooperating for their individual benefit, specializing, organizing into clans and corporations, and together forming the human civilization that allows its member parts to function in a more complicated way.

II.3. Immorality in using animal for food and labor

The Buddha did not permit his disciples the use of animals for riding or the use of their leather. The Buddha denounced violence and advocated a ban on the killing of animals for the sake of food, sacrifice, sport or pleasure; though it is a matter as to whether he banned violence under all circumstances.

Animals do not want to ride bicycles, stand on their heads, balance on balls, or jump through rings of fire. Sadly, they have no choice. Trainers use abusive tools, like whips and electric prods, and force them to perform. Not only are elephants, bears, tigers, and other animals abused by trainers, they suffer from extreme loneliness, boredom, and frustration from being locked in tiny cages or chains month after month, city after city. Instead of being

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treated like furniture that is loaded and unloaded into trucks and storage areas, these animals should be in their natural habitat, exploring, seeking, mates, and raising families. Animals held captive in circuses, rodeos, zoos, and other entertainment venues need you to speak out for them. Teach your community why, for animals’ sake, they should go for a hike or take in a baseball game instead of supporting these unkind businesses. Most animals, plants, species, ecosystems, and other natural wholes are left out of direct account.15

In modern society, the only justification for killing animals for food is that people find meat to be convenient and that people enjoy the taste of meat. In other words, meat provides convenience and pleasure. These morally vacant justifications for eating meat should be weighed against unnecessarily killing of billions of animals each year and the devastating effects of meat production on both the environment and human starvation. In the past there may have been some reasonable justifications for eating meat. In most modern societies, it is perfectly possible to live a healthy, normal life without causing the deaths of animals. We still cling to the past out of habit. Animals are eaten neither for health, nor to increase our food supply. Their flesh is a luxury, consumed because people like its taste.16

Human beings also kill animals not just for food. They take the animal’s skin to make shoes and hats and clothes. And even that is not enough. They take these animal’s bones to make necklaces or buttons or earrings. In short, they kill many, many animals in order to sell the animal parts for money. Because of these desires and this strong animal

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consciousness, human beings fight with each other, and destroy nature. They do not value life. So now this whole world has many problems; problems with the water, problems with the air, problems with the earth and food. Many new problems appear every day. These problems do not happen by accident. Human beings make each and every one of these problems. Dogs, cats, or lions, or snakes no animal makes as many problems for this world as human beings do. Humans do not understand their true nature, so they use their thinking and desire to create so much suffering for this world. That is why some people say that human beings are the number one bad animal in this world. So human beings must soon wake up and find their original seeds, their original nature.\(^\text{17}\)

All sentient beings desire to live. All animals try to escape when being killed for food. No living being wants to be killed or hurt. Just as we don’t wish that anybody should hurt us or killed us, in the same way, no living being wishes to be hurt or killed.\(^\text{18}\) Living in the world, we are all frightened to die or to be killed, whereas we sacrifice the lives of many animals for our pleasure. Perhaps we are a hundred times or a thousand times more cruel than animals. As being intelligent, we open many universities in the world, teaching a variety of subjects. But there are not enough schools to teach how to live in dignity, how to treat kindly between each other, between mankind and living beings. We are killing animals for our food, for their skin, for their ivory to make our ornaments. The problem with eating meat was that it debased human beings to the level of


mere animals. For most people in modern, urban shed societies, the principal form of contact with nonhuman animals is at meal times.19

The use of animals for food probably represents the greatest exploitation of them at present. Several billion animals are factory farmed yearly in the United States alone, and probably trillions of fish are also harvested annually, to die, apparently in great distress, from suffocation.20

Today, there are a lot of people who love animals and talk about protecting to animal. In the article of the Time Nation, The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has imposed a blanket ban on use of animals like lions, tigers, panthers and monkeys in films. The filmmakers cannot use animals for scenes shot on hard surface, or use them for shot that feature use of explosive. Pappu, an animal lover, said: “I certainly will not want to can scenes where we have to show horse falling and hurting themselves but it is ridiculous to stop us from using pigeons and dogs”.21

Anti-hunt campaigners argue that hunting is cruel, causing great suffering and a violent death to animals. In most societies today, it is unnecessary to hunt for food. Hunting had become a sport rather than a necessity.22 However, there are some people who do not eat any meat at all. Many Hindus and Buddhists believe in a code of non-violence, and do not kill any animals for food. A number of people in Western countries are vegetarian because they also feel that it is wrong to kill animals for their meat.23

23 Ibid. 12.
II. 4. The numberless animal killed for food.

Actually, of all rapacious animals, man is the most universal destroyer. The destruction of quadrupeds, birds and insects is, in general, limited to particular kinds: but the rapacity of man has hardly any limitation. His empire over the other animals which inhabit this globe is almost universal.²⁴

The American College of Surgeons supports the responsible use and human care and treatment of laboratory animals in research, education, teaching, and product safety testing in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal animal welfare laws. Further, the membership believes that only as many animals as necessary should be used; that any pain or distress animals may experience should be minimized or alleviated.

Worldwide, over 200 million living animals a year are used for research in scientist experiments.²⁵ 60 billion animals are processed for human consumption each year, not counting fish.²⁶ And about 35,000 bulls are killed in bullfights in Spain each year.²⁷ “In a lifetime, the average person in the USA will eat 23 pigs, 3 lambs, 11 cattle, 45 turkeys, and 1,097 chickens.”²⁸ Just one person changing to a vegetarian diet would save more than 100 innocent beings per year. That is why Dennis J. Kucinich said “Every one of us knows a story of animal cruelty, every one of us knows how in one way or another official policies have sanctioned cruelty to animals.”²⁹

Anywhere we go, creatures destined for the dinner plate endure cruel living conditions. We are eating them anyway, goes the strange logic. In the

²⁵ Barbara James, Op. Cit. 22.
²⁷ Barbara James, Op. Cit. 34.
²⁸ Ibid. 13.
United States, the convention is to estimate the number of animals used for such purposes at about 70 to 90 million per year. Some estimates, however, are as low as 15 million per year. Yet there are a few persons who claim that the best estimate is 120 million per year. The United States is not a good place to be if you’re a farmed animal. Though you are a living, feeling, sentient being, there is little in the nation’s laws to protect you abuse. First, the federal level Animal Welfare Act has no meaning for you because the word “animal,” as legally defined, does not apply to “farm animals used for food, fiber, or production purposes.” Consequently, even though the title of this statute implies to the public that the government looks after the welfare of animals destined for the dinner plate, it does not. And by leaving farmed animals unprotected against the onslaught of industrial farm production, the law actually helps to open the floodgates to even more animal cruelty to a scale, in fact, never before seen. Other federal level anti-cruelty laws that cover specific conditions during transport, at stockyards, and during the slaughter process similarly lack teeth in their wording and are inadequately enforced.

More than twenty-seven billion animals are killed for food every year in the U.S. alone. Animals in factory farms have no legal protection from cruelty that would be illegal if it were inflicted on dogs or cats, including neglect, mutilations, genetic manipulation, drug regimens that cause chronic pain and crippling, transport through all weather extremes, and gruesome and violent slaughter. If animals count in their own right, our use of animals

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for food becomes questionable especially when animal flesh is a luxury rather than a necessity.\textsuperscript{32}

The slaughterhouse is the final stop for animals raised for their flesh. These ghastly places, while little known to most meat-eaters, process enormous numbers of animals each years. A surprising quantity of meat is consumed by the meat-eater.

\textbf{II.5. The strictly issue of Meat-eating in Buddhism}

Animals are not property. They are not entertainment, laboratory subjects, clothes, or shooting targets. Animals are not food. It has nothing to do with being an ‘animal lover’ some animals are not very lovable, Law concludes, “but would anyone expect that in order to be concerned about equality for a mistreated racial minority, you have to love each individual member of that minority or regard them as cute and cuddly?”\textsuperscript{33}

The word “meat” will be used to designate all forms of food derived from animals whether they fish, flesh or fowl. From the ethico-moral perspective there is no essential difference between these various form of flesh.

The Buddha’s views on meat-eating should be put in the context of his times. The earliest Indian religious texts, the Vedas, did not prohibit meat eating or the killing of animals. Indeed large scale sacrifice became the norm, particularly the cruel ritual of the \textit{aśvamedha} which gradually assumed large dimensions as the power of the Indian rulers grew.


Eating meat and killing beings for their meat are two separate things. The Buddha himself sometimes ate that was offered to him. Those who are merely eating meat also lack the intent to kill.34

Over twenty-five centuries have passed, when mentioning about Buddhism, it is generally believed that Buddhism is a religion of kindness, humanity and equality. But some historians and scholars when studying Buddhism have felt doubts that Buddha’s attitude of allowing his disciples to take meat and his kindness to living animal seems somewhat contradictory. Therefore how was the Buddha’s attitude towards meat eating in early Indian Buddhism?

There are few texts which discussed about the Buddhist view of meat-eating. Meat-eating is a controversial question and until now it continues being debated. Most of Buddhists in Theravādin Buddhist countries are non-vegetarian. The question of meat-eating or vegetable eating is not really an important problem to Buddhism. However, it is obvious that the problem of meat-eating has never been encouraged in Buddhism. The Buddha did neither want his disciples to kill any animals and to feel them nor insist the followers have to keep vegetarian diet.

It is true that, the Buddha and his disciples were those who wandered in the forest or from village to village and had to accept whatever the householder gave them without expressing their intentions to have any particular food. They had to accept whatever the house-holder offered them. This may be the main reason why the Master did not restrain his disciples from meat-eating.

During the Buddha’s lifetime, besides being a disciple, Devadatta was also a cousin of Śākyamuni Buddha who wanted to become the leader of his own samgha, then, he proposed five extraordinarily strict rules for monks, which he knew the Buddha would not allow. Devadatta’s reasoning was that after he had proposed those rules and the Buddha had not allowed them, Devadatta could claim that he did follow and practice these five rules, making him a better and more pure monk. One of these five extra rules required monks to be vegetarian.\textsuperscript{35} According to the Pāli Canon, he taught his Samgha to do five tapas (rules) in their whole life:\textsuperscript{36}

a. Monks should dwell all their lives in the forest.
b. They should accept no invitations to meals, but live entirely on alms obtained by begging.
c. They should wear only robes made of discarded rags and accept no robes from the laity.
d. They should dwell at the foot of a tree and not under a roof.
e. They should abstain completely from fish and flesh.

Devadatta, one of the Buddha’s disciples, tried to create a schism in the Samgha by suggesting that the Buddha make vegetarianism compulsory, monks and nuns should not eat meat in any form.\textsuperscript{37} But the Buddha rejected that idea, because the Buddha understood that not all landscape can support the growth of vegetables to support the population. When living in places such as mountains and deserts, one has no choice but to eat meat due to the

scarcity of vegetables. Consequently the Buddha’s attitude of allowing his disciples to take meat is his choice of the Middle Way. However his disciples were not allowed to eat meat freely, they had to observe certain specific rules made by the Buddha and these rules were clearly mentioned in Srīghanācārasaṃgraha.

According to the Srīghanācārasaṃgraha, an important guide book on Vinaya, a Srāmaṇera (Buddhist novice) should not allow to take meat which is specially prepared for him, because he may do the act of killing due to greed aroused by it. There are three ways to know whether the meat is specially prepared for him or not. Either it may be seen by himself very clearly and without any confusion or heard from very a confidante, or suspected after seeing wings, horns, etc...Then he is not allowed to eat at that house.

In case, a monk gets suspicious, he should ask the householder whether those animals and birds have been killed specially for him. If the householder replied in the affirmative, he should not take it, otherwise he may take it. In the same way, if it is prepared specially for any other monk, nun etc., even then he is not allowed to take it. On the other hand, the monks are allowed to take meat if it is prepared not especially for him, if he gets in alms, and if he finds dead flesh of animal being killed by another animal, or dead after eating grain, rice, barley...or in sacrifice in the name of the household’s parents.

These are rules which the monks should observe before they take meat. If they take it without observing the rules they have to suffer sarivaratyagei may be lose their Srāmaṇerahood.
In the Jīvaka Sūtra, the Buddha taught that there are three cases in which meat may not be eaten by a monk: Having (1) seen (2) heard, or (3) suspected that the meat has been especially acquired for him by killing an animal (i.e. the animal has been killed specifically for the monk). This rule is called the Rule of Tikoṭiparisuddha (Pure in Three Ways).\(^{38}\) However, according to the Vinaya, monks are forbidden to eat ten kinds of meat, namely: elephant, tiger, snake, horse, bear, dog, lion, leopard, cheetah, especially man.\(^{39}\)

Addressing the monks Buddha said: “Do not eat meat knowing that it has been killed specially for (your) use; I allow the use of fish and meat blameless in three ways, unseen, unheard and unsuspected”.\(^{40}\) We shall refer to this rule as the Buddha’s three-fold rule on meat eating. The three conditions postulated amount to not witnessing the actual killing, not being told that the meat had been specially killed (for the use of the consumer), and even in the absence of such information not suspecting that such was the case (i.e. the eye, ear and mind should be satisfied as to the “blamelessness” of the meat).

The Buddha said: ‘Jīvaka, who ever destroys living things on account of the Tathāgatha or the disciples of the Tathāgatha, accumulate much demerit on five instances:

- If he said, go bring that living thing of such name.

In this first instance he accumulates much demerit.

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\(^{38}\) MN. 55.
\(^{39}\) Vin. II, Mahavagga VI, 23.
- If that living thing is pulled along, tied, with pain at the throat, feeling displeased and unpleasant. In this second instance he accumulates much demerit.
- If it was said, go kill that animal. In this third instance he accumulates much demerit.
- When killing if that animal feels displeased and unpleasant. In this fourth instance he accumulates, much demerit.
- When the Tathāgatha or a disciple of the Tathāgatha tastes that unsuitable food. In this fifth instance he accumulates much demerit.

Jīvaka, if anyone destroys the life of a living thing on account of the Tathāgatha or a disciple of the Tathāgatha, he accumulates much demerit on these five instances.\textsuperscript{41}

When the Buddha was alive, there was not the huge choice of food that is available today. It is clear that the issue of killing animals for food was one which he gave a lot of thought to. It is also clear that his teachings extend compassion to all sentient beings, including those destined for the butcher. But in some sutras he did not require his followers to be vegetarians, and rejected such a requirement when suggested by his cousin Devadatta.

The relevant portion of the \textit{Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta} reads as follows:

\begin{quote}
“Then Cunda addressed the Lord and said, “May the Lord, together with the bhikkhus, do me the honour of taking his meal, at my house tomorrow?” And the Lord gave his consent by his silence … Now at the end
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{MN. 55.}
of the night, Cunda, the smith, prepared at his house sweet rice and cakes, and sūkara-maddava.”42

Before entering Mahāparinirvāṇa, the Buddha took the last meal offered by Cunda. According to DīghaNikāya, the meal included sweet rice, cakes and sūkaramaddava. The double word sūkaramaddava, according to some scholars, denotes soft boar’s flesh or pig’s soft food. However, almost scholars agree that this word refers a kind of truffle. Cunda had intended the Buddha to his house. He could not have offered pork to the Buddha as it would have meant violation of the Tikōtiparisuddha.43

Early Indian Buddhism allowed monks to eat meat with the following exceptions:44

1. In three cases: (a) seen, (b) heard or (c) suspected for monk.
2. Use of raw meat was not allowed. But in case of sickness even was flesh and blood could be used. The cooking and eating of the remains of the kills of lions, tigers, hyenas and wolves are allowed by the Buddha to be eaten by the monks. The Buddha also allowed “the use of the fat of bears, fish, alligators, swine, asses, if received at the right time to be partaken of with oil.” Indeed, fish and meat are mentioned among the five superior and delicate foods which a monk who is ill allowed to eat.
3. Ten kinds of meat.

Therefore, we should have no doubt about Buddha’s attitude towards meat eating, because it is only the means of the Buddha in order to make

favorable condition to his disciples on the way proceeding to Holy life. Actually, the meat eating is not a great problem; the most important problem to a Buddhist monk is to control himself, to practice the Buddha’s teaching, especially to cultivate the knowledge of the ultimate Truth, complete freedom, to attain the happiness trust in present life, in this world.

According to the Srisñācārasamgraha, the Buddhist monks are allowed to take meat in a certain limit. It depends either on the tradition of each country or on the climate or on the monk’s heath-situation. However, in these days, monks live in comfortable life under the support of lay people in monastery; the change in menu from meat-eating to vegetating is a practices matter to perform the compassion to all living beings.

II.6. The Theravādin principle and Mahāyāna regulation about meat eating and vegetarian food

Actually, isn’t there a difference regarding the question of meat-eating between the two main schools of Buddhism, “Theravāda” and “Mahāyāna”? Two very fundamental teachings of Buddhism are non-violence and harmlessness. There is an associated popular conception that all Buddhist are therefore vegetarians. This is not automatically the case, but vegetarianism certainly matches the spirit of Buddhism described by those fundamental teachings. Followers of Theravāda reside mostly in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka while followers of Mahāyāna are living in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Attitudes towards meat consumption are markedly different within these two traditions. In Theravada meat consumption has been accepted while in Mahāyāna meat consumption is frowned upon.
Principles of Buddhism have put many restrictions on the monks. First, no monk can kill an animal. Second, no monk can accept meat which has been specially prepared for him. Third, certain kinds of meat cannot be eaten under any circumstances. The monks were supposed to beg food. Mahāyāna monks and nuns in China and Korea are strictly vegetarian and prepare their own food.45

a. Attitude of Theravāda Tradition towards Meat-eating

In the countries which belong to the Theravāda Buddhism, the problem of meat-eating is an ordinary thing to monks. The most important problem to a Buddhist monk is how to control himself from greed, anger, and ignorance, to practice the teaching of the Buddha, to perform the compassion to all living beings, especially to cultivate the Knowledge of the Ultimate Truth, complete freedom in order to attain the true happiness in present life in this world. However, they are forbidden from accepting animal flesh if they know, believe or suspect that the animal in question was killed especially for them, i.e., if the visits of begging minks have become an occasion for the slaughter of animals.

The Vinaya for monastic is not a set of ethically based rules; it is a set of rules for living as a monastic in ancient Indian culture. As such, it has much that is specific to the ancient Indian way of life, and the expectations of that society. Some of those features did not translate into other cultures fully as Buddhism expanded out of the subcontinent. Specifically, Mahāyāna Buddhism came to value the universal ethical spirit of Buddhism over the transmitted letter of the Vinaya rules.

With regard to the killing of animals for food, it is obvious that the purer the food we eat the more fit will our body become for the functioning of our inner faculties, but once more common sense must be employed. The Buddha as saying: “My disciples have permission to eat whatever food it is customary to eat in any place or country provided it is done without indulgence of the appetite, or evil desire”.\textsuperscript{46} And the monk must follow the rule ‘\textit{Pure in three respects}’: the monk has not seen, heard or suspected that the animal has been killed specifically for him.\textsuperscript{47}

They should eat something else. But they should also not become neurotic trying to avoid everything that contributes indirectly to killing. When we think about it, a certain amount of indirect contribution to killing can be found in most contemporary lives. Even driving a car or walking across the lawn kills beings. Various types of medicines we use have been tested on animals killing them, maiming them, or making them sick. Benefiting from these medicines is not killing. The Buddha said very clearly that your intention is what really counts.\textsuperscript{48}

Ambedkar says that the circumstantial evidence on the point is that the Buddha had no objection to eating meat offered to him as part of his alms. The monk can eat meat offered to him provided he was not a party to the killing of it. The Buddha resisted the opposition of Devadatta who insisted the monks should be prohibited from eating meat given to them by way of alms. Ambedkar gives another piece of evidence on the point is that Buddha was only opposed to the killing of animals in sacrifice.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47} Vin. I. 237- 238.
People in our society often eat meat out of habit, because they have developed a taste for it, and for the lack of information about its ill effects. But these factors do not represent moral justification. Meat-eating is immoral because it involves the inhumane treatment of animals. It violates a basic moral principle of heaven and earth: namely, that it is wrong to kill, wrong to inflict unnecessary suffering and death upon other creatures.

We have always understood that, given its strong principle of ahimsā or non-violence, Buddhism frowned upon meat-eating, since meat-eating inevitably meant doing violence to animals that were slaughtered for food. The Buddha Śākyamuni himself was against the eating of meat and was in fact a strong advocate of vegetarianism and compassion towards animals. ahimsā or non-killing forms a very important part of the Buddha’s teaching.\footnote{Ibid. 99.}

In the light of the three fold rule the Pāli texts make a distinction between two kinds of meat, called respectively uddissakatamamsa and pavattamamsa. The former term is used to refer to meat destined for a specific person’s consumption. Such meat would not be cleared by the three-fold rule. Although not stated so a rough criterion which could be used to identify this kind of meat is that the person doing the killing has a clear notion that the meat would be consumed by a specific person, and if that person were to consume it that person would partake not only of the meat but also of the karmic consequences attached to the provision of that meat. The term used for the other kind of which it is permissible to eat literally means “already existing meat”. There has been some controversy as to what types of meat would fall into this category of “already existing meat”. Some
interpreters have taken it to mean that it refers to the meat of animals killed accidentally or killed by other animals. But in fact it includes meat sold commercially. This is clear from another incident in the Vinaya where the lady Suppiya sends her servant to the market to fetch meat (to make a soup for a sick monk), and is told by the servant that “existing meat” could not be found as “today is not a slaughter day”. This shows that meat slaughtered for sale in the market was regarded as pavatta-maṇṣa and therefore falling into the category of permissible meat. This kind of meat is considered blameless because it is karmically neutral as far as the consumer is concerned (but not of course for the provider of the meat who must take the full karmic responsibility). We shall refer to the two kinds of meat as karmically effective and karmically neutral meat.

In other words the Buddha made a distinction between Principle and Rule. He did not make ahiṃsā a matter of rule. He enunciated it as a matter of principle or way of life. Ambedkar says that a principle leaves you free to act. A rule does not. Rule either breaks you or you break the rule.\(^{51}\)

b. Attitude of Mahāyāna Tradition towards Meat-eating and Vegetarian Food

Vegetarianism was not a part of the early Buddhist tradition and the Buddha himself was not a vegetarian.\(^{52}\) The Buddha got his food either by going on alms rounds or by being invited to the houses of his supporters and in both cases he ate what he was given. Before his enlightenment he had experimented with various diets including a meatless diet, but he eventually

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\(^{51}\) Ibid. 99.

abandoned them believing that they did not contribute to spiritual development.

Vegetarianism is a growing practice in modern society and some of its-new-found enthusiasts have pointed an accusing finger at the Buddha who is recorded as having eaten meat, and at modern Buddhists who eat meat. According to Chatral Rinpoche with the answers of an interview that “if you take meat, it goes against the vows one take in seeking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha. Because when you take meat you have to take a being’s life.”53

The Sutta-Nipāta underlines this point when it says that it is immorality that makes one impure (morally and spiritually), not the eating of meat. The Buddha is often described as eating meat, he recommended meat broth as a cure for certain types of illness and advised monks for practical reasons, to avoid certain types of meat, implying that other types were quite acceptable. In the Lankāvatāra Sūtra, the Buddha taught that “killing animals for profit and buying meat are both evil deeds; these kinds of actions will result in a rebirth in the horrifying realms of hell”.54

Today it is often said that Mahāyānists are vegetarian and Theravādins are not. However the situation is a little more complex than that. Generally Theravādins have no dietary restrictions although it is not uncommon to find monks and lay people in Sri Lanka who are strict vegetarians. Others abstain from meat while eating fish. Chinese and Vietnamese monks and nuns are strictly vegetarian and the lay community tries to follow their example

54 Ibid. 31.
Although many do not. Amongst Tibetans and Japanese Buddhists, vegetarianism is rare.

When Buddhism later moved to China, large monasteries developed with landholdings. Focusing on East Asia, begging for food was considered an unacceptable custom in Chinese Confucian culture and never got firmly established in Chinese Buddhism. Instead, monasteries were granted large tracts of land to grow their own food. So, unlike the situation in Indian Buddhism, monks in China started growing, storing, preparing, and cooking their own food.\textsuperscript{55} Monastery kitchens appeared for the first time.

The threefold restriction on meat for monks already mentioned became meaningless for Chinese monks who no longer were begging for food daily. Monks were faced with the problem of interpreting the Vinaya rules to match their situation. The Chinese monks interpreted the spirit of the Vinaya to mean that all meat eating was to be forbidden, since the monks were doing the preparation themselves and for themselves. Thus, any meat prepared and consumed in a Chinese monastery would be obviously prepared specifically for the monks, and so it all came to be considered unallowable.

In Chinese Buddhism, and in Korean and Japanese Buddhism under Chinese influence, the practice of vegetarianism filtered down to the laity as well. Many Chinese lay Buddhists at present are vegetarian, and a unique style of Chinese vegetarian cooking has developed, originally for lay visitors to monasteries, where meat products are mimicked in wheat gluten and soy products.

A new code of Mahāyāna precepts became popular in China. This text contains a number of Chinese adaptations of the Vinaya, and emphasizes the practice of a Mahāyāna practitioner, a Bodhisattva. The precepts contained in this text are thus sometimes called the Bodhisattva Precepts. There are ten major and forty-eight minor precepts. The Third Minor Precept specifically prohibits eating meat, perhaps the first time such a precept was codified in Buddhism. The text of the *Third Minor Precept of the Fanwangjing* (梵網經) reads: A disciple of the Buddha must eat no flesh of sentient beings. If he eats their flesh, he injures his potential for developing universal compassion. Sentient beings will flee from on sight. For his reason, Mahāyāna practitioners should not eat the flesh of any sentient beings.

“Pray let us not eat any flesh or meat whatsoever coming from living beings. Anyone who eats flesh is cutting himself off from the great seed of his own merciful and compassionate nature, for which all sentient beings will reject him and flee from him when they see him acting so. . . Someone who eats flesh is defiling himself beyond measure . . .”

The foregoing argument should not be taken as a justification of meat-eating. Our concern is to speculate on the rationale behind the three-fold rule on this subject enunciated by the Buddha and to refute the charge that the Buddha’s rule involves a moral contradiction with the other parts of the Buddha’s teaching such as his insistence on loving-kindness and the precept on the taking of life.

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Even though there is no blanket proscription on meat eating in the Buddha’s teaching the three-fold rule that he enunciated has considerable value. The Buddha was concerned with devising a practical rule that will reconcile the dilemma involved in living in saṃsāra and allowing other life forms too to exist. The fact that the three-fold rule is not ideal is not a reflection on the Buddha but of the existential fact that saṃsāra faring must involve harm to others. The Buddha’s final solution to this is perhaps the only way in which this problem could be satisfactorily solved. This solution is to chart a course to get out of phenomenal existence, i.e. chart a path to Nirvāṇa.

The drive toward active animal compassion and vegetarianism was promoted especially by the Mahāyāna school. The viewpoint that all life is interrelated was used to promote the abstention from meat, and within a Buddhist context serves as a basis for protesting all maltreatment of animals. The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra also includes stories to emphasize the need for vegetarianism. We are protected by the mindfulness and the loving kindness of the Buddha and the Buddhists who also practice non-violence. This energy of loving kindness brings us the feeling of safety, health, and joy in this life.

II.7. Vegetarian and Benefits of Vegetarian Eating

a. What is the Vegetarian?

The word ‘vegetarian’ appeared in 1842 and came into widespread use after the establishment of the vegetarian Society in England in 1847 by secular followers of Metcalfe.”

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Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, or poultry. Vegans, in addition to being vegetarian, do not use other animal products and by products such as eggs, dairy products, honey, leather, fur, silk, wool, cosmetics, and soaps derived from animal products. Since much of the world’s population finds that vegetarian meals can be delightfully tasty, there is good reason for thinking that the pleasures many people derive from eating can be completely replaced with pleasures from eating vegetables.\textsuperscript{58}

The term “vegan” refers to one that does not eat any animals, but also any animal products or derivatives, including milk, cheese, honey; or using animal furs, leathers, skins, etc. In modern terms, we might use the word “vegan” to describe the strict Mahāyāna diet. Vegetarianism, a natural and logical ramification of the moral precept against the taking of life is a diet that includes no animal meat. The Buddha recommended that pure Bodhisattvas follow this ideal: They who do not wear silk, leather boots, furs, or down ...and who do not consume milk, cream, or butter, can truly transcend this world. Both physically and mentally one must avoid the bodies and the by-products of beings, by neither wearing them nor eating them. It says that such people have true liberation.

There is no nutritional need for humans to eat any animal products, all of our dietary needs as infants, children and adults are best supplied by an animal free diet. Our evolutionary ancestors were, and our closest primate relatives are, vegetarians. Human teeth and intestines are designed for eating and digesting plant foods, so it is no wonder that our major health problems can be traced to meat consumption.

b. The kinds of Vegetarian

Types of Vegetarians\textsuperscript{59}

1. Vegetarian: A person who doesn’t eat meat, fish or fowl.

2. Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian: A person who doesn’t eat meat, fish, or fowl, but does eat eggs and dairy products.

3. Ovo-Vegetarian: A person who doesn’t eat meat, fish, fowl, or dairy products, but does eat eggs.

4. Lacto-Vegetarian: A person who doesn’t eat meat, fowl, or eggs, but does eat dairy products.

5. Vegan: A person who doesn’t eat meat, fish, fowl, eggs, or any dairy products. Most vegans also do not use any animal products such as leather or fur either.

There are many views about vegetarian such as:

1. Vegetarian: Some vegetarians will consume animal products, if the animal was not killed to produce it. You either eat flesh or you don’t.

   - Lacto-vegetarians will use dairy products (milk, butter, cheese).

   - Ovo-Vegetarians will eat eggs.

   - Lacto-Ovo-Vegetarians will eat both.

Besides, there are other types of vegetarian:

\textsuperscript{59} Jennifer Horsman & Jaim Flowers, \textit{Please don’t eat the animals: All the Reasons you need to be a vegetarian}, USA: Quill Driver Books, 2007: 3.
- **Pesco-vegetarian** (fish). If you eat fish, you may call yourself a pescatarian.

- **Pollo-vegetarian** (chicken): avoid red meat and fish but eat chicken.

- **Pesco-pollo vegetarians**: avoid red meat but eat chicken and fish.

In addition, there is another vegetarian like as Fruitarian that same as vegetarian, but only eats foods that don’t kill the plant (apples can be picked without killing the entire plant, carrots cannot). A fruitarian does not, as commonly believed, eat only fruit. Some people whose diet consists of 75% or more fruit consider themselves fruitarians.  

60 Moreover, there are also those who call themselves Vegan. This is a much stricter lifestyle. Vegans do not eat or use any product from animals or insects. Therefore they do not wear leather, silk, wool, fur or down products, or eat honey, marshmallows, jell, or dairy products, or use lanolin or other products which are derived from living creatures in any way. They also do not buy products from companies that test on animals or any products with animal derived ingredients.

2. **Vegans**: Eat no animal products at all. The philosophy sometimes also espouses not wearing anything made from animals as well (leather). Additionally, products like honey may also be considered taboo.

- **Lacto-Ovo Vegetarians**: Eat no dead animals or dead animal products whatsoever, but still consume some products where the animal is not killed in the process (eggs or dairy).

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- Vegetarians (general): Like above but sometimes also consume fish. Of course, the part about fish can be argued by the above groups, but an exception is sometimes made due to fish being so far from our own species and hence, sometimes, the less strict interpretation will at least allow for “Seafood Vegetarians.”

*There are different kinds of vegetarians:*

1. **Vegans** avoid all animal products. They don't eat eggs, dairy products, or even honey. Many vegans also avoid anything made from animal products, such as leather, fur, and wool. Also avoids non-food animal products such as leather, wood, down, ect. Main sources of protein: beans, nits and seeds, and whole grains.

2. **Fruitarians** same as Vegan, they eat only fruits, seeds, nuts, (This includes the fruit of vegetables such as tomatoes and courgettes. However they never eat the roots of plants such as carrots and potatoes) and other plant components that can be gathered without harming the plant.

3. **Lacto-vegetarians** eat dairy products, but not eggs. They may or may not avoid non-dietary use of animal products.

4. **Lacto-ovo vegetarians** eat both eggs and dairy products. This is the most common group of vegetarians and what most people think of when someone says they're "a vegetarian."

5. **Pesce-vegetarians** include fish in their diet.

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6. **Pollo-vegetarians** eat fowl, such as chicken and turkey, but avoid red meat and pork.

7. **Flexitarians** mainly eat vegetarian food, but will occasionally make exceptions.

8. **Su Vegetarian:** Excludes all animal products as well as vegetables in the allium family (which have the characteristic aroma of onion and garlic, scallions, or leeks.)

9. **Raw vegan** is a diet which combines veganism and raw foodism. It excludes all food of animal origin, and all food cooked above 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit).

10. **Semi-vegetarian** Eats predominantly vegetarian but includes some meat. Also called flexitarian or pseudo-vegetarian.

11. **Transitional vegetarian:** One who is transitioning to vegetarianism but not quite there yet or a temporary vegetarian.

In a Vegetarian diet you don’t eat meat and fish. This can be out of health, ecological, ethical or environmental reasons. You even help World Hunger by becoming a vegetarian. Modern vegetarianism includes a documented set of beliefs that look remarkably religious. It involves the expression of views and ideology about the relationship of humankind to the world in which we live and the path to salvation to be followed. Many of those who have adopted a vegetarian diet have done so because of the ethical

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argument, either from reading about or personally experiencing what goes on daily at any one of the thousands of slaughterhouses in the U.S. and other countries, where animals suffer the cruel process of forced confinement, manipulation and violent death. Their pain and terror is beyond calculation.

There are various forms in which a vegetarian diet can be followed:

- **Vegan**: Does not eat anything derived from animals and does not use any animal-derived products.

- **Lacto-ovo**: Permits eating milk, eggs and cheese as these can be produced without killing the animal. In some cases, for health reasons, lacto-ovo vegetarians will only eat non-fat forms of dairy products.

- **Pesci**: Permits the eating of fish and seafood, but no meat from land-based animals or birds, since these forms do not affect the land-based environmental issues (though there are other issues related to pollution of the seas and depletion of fishing sources). Pesci-vegetarians also note that regarding the health aspects of the issue, fish is less harmful than meat and contains beneficial omega-3 fatty acids,\(^{64}\) and regarding the cruelty aspects that fish may be vertebrates (though shrimp, crab, lobster are not) but are still at the lowest level of consciousness of the vertebrates.

Don’t eat any animals (Vegetarian, a.k.a. Ovo-Lacto Vegetarian). This is one of the least arbitrary standards, as there’s a fairly clear line between animals and non-animals. All animals are sensate, react to pain, and are

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arguably a higher form of life than plants, fungi, etc. Even some invertebrate animals, such as octopuses, can be extremely intelligent.

Dried beans and dark green vegetables are especially good sources of iron, better on a per calorie basis than meat. Iron absorption is increased markedly by eating foods containing vitamin C along with foods containing iron. Soybeans, lentils, blackstrap molasses, kidney beans, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, Swiss chard, black beans, prune juice, beet greens, peas, figs, bulgur, botchy, raisins, watermelon, millet, kale etc.

c. Benefits of Vegetarian Eating

1. Respect to Buddha-nature in animals

“All living beings have Buddha-nature”65 “All beings, sentient or not, have the same perfect wisdom.”66 Buddhism regards all living creatures as being endowed with the Buddha nature and the potential to become Buddhas. That is why Buddhism teaches us to refrain from killing and to liberate creatures instead.

Śākyamuni demonstrated to our human beings how he became the Buddha from a human body 2500 years ago. All human beings have their own Buddha’s nature. For they have both good seeds and evil seeds, they can be human beings. However, we have to develop our good seeds, which will help us to open our mind and attain wisdom. Our mind is just like a mirror, which reflects if clear. If our mind is defiled with false thoughts and attachments, we are afflicted and perplexed.

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66 Ibid. 2.
Based upon the teaching of the Lotus Sūtra, we can say that the true and eternal nature of the life of Śākyamuni Buddha is the active mode of our own true and eternal nature. As an actual person in history, Śākyamuni Buddha showed through his own life, how to apply the wisdom and compassion springing from the Buddha-nature. Even now, the Buddha’s spiritual presence embodied in the Lotus Sūtra continues to guide us to a realization of our own potential.

Buddhism teaches that, when the Buddha nature manifests itself from within, it will receive protection from without. This is one of its fundamental principles. The Lotus Sūtra says, “I have profound reverence for you.” The Nirvāṇa Sūtra states, “All living beings alike possess the Buddha nature.” The eternal Buddha Śākyamuni exists in all human beings. All things being of Buddha become Buddha. You surely will be able to become a Buddha.

All living beings can equally attain Buddhahood, the dragon king’s daughter, a woman in reptile form. In the Lotus sutra, Mañjuśrī said “There is a Dragon King daughter who is just eight years old. She is the faculties, conducts, and Karmas of living beings and has attained Dharani. She is able to receive and uphold the entire storehouse of extremely profound secrets spoken by the Buddha. She has deeply entered Dhyāna Samādhi and thoroughly penetrated all Dharmas. In the space of a Kṣana she brought broth the Bodhi mind and attained to irreversibility. Her eloquence is unobstructed and she is compassionately mindful of all living beings as if

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they were her children. Her merit and virtue is complete. The thoughts of her mind and the words from her mouth are subtle, wonderful, and expansive. She is compassionate, humane and yielding; harmonious and refined in mind and will, and she is able to arrive at Bodhi”.

According to the Buddhist view of things, the nature of being is not eternally or absolutely fixed. Beings that were once humans or animals may be reborn as gods; beings that were once gods may be reborn as animals or in hellish realms. Certainly, for the Buddhist tradition, the being who became Buddha or awakened had been born a man, but equally that being is regarded as having spent many previous lives as a god. Yet in becoming a Buddha he goes beyond such categories of being as human and divine.

The loving-kindness and compassion comes from our Buddha-nature, which is inherent in every living being. The Dharma has enriched us in many ways. So deep inside is our compassion which tells we eating the flesh of those poor living creatures is wrong, but habits are hard to stop. Eating meat causes two kinds of suffering: the immediate suffering for the animal that is being slaughtered, and the suffering caused by the cycle of death and rebirth. When a sentient being dies, it is forced to begin again the painful process of rebirth. The only way to stop this cycle is to reach full enlightenment. Since it is possible for animals to become enlightened, killing them deprives them of that chance.

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2. Avoid eating to relative in the past life

The Mahāyāna sect does not concur with the view that Buddha ever allowed even the (so called) ‘blameless’ meat eating to the monks. The Mahāyāna adherents argue that meat is liable to cause sickness. If a meat eater meditates, he will not only spoil his own health, but also hinder the process of meditative practices and, thus, disturb concentration of mind. They also believe that all beings have been relatives in the past lives; hence one relative should not kill another one. Moreover, meat eating will also cause rebirth in a low class human, apart from generating arrogance. They also argue that no sacrifice of animals will ever take place, if there are no meat eaters.

In “On Meat Eating” essays, Chatral Rinpoche urges Buddhists to look on animals with compassion and refrain from eating meat. And In “Thang-tong Gyalpo’s Aspiration Prayer for the Liberation of Fish,” he gives us a practice for cultivating joy in being able to help the helpless. In “Advice for Nyingma Practitioners,” he describes equanimity in its different aspects: looking at all beings as having been one’s parents in past lifetimes and reminding us that anyone can be a holder of the Buddha’s teachings if they live according to the Dharma, not just monks and lamas of high status.72

Through numberless lives, all living beings across many lives in the past, the tears of living beings more than the four oceans,73 the bones like as the mountain, nobody who exist in the world that we don’t find them are our relatives. So all living beings live on this world, are our parents, sisters, brothers. If we kill and eat meat, it means we eat our relatives in the past life.

73 SN. II.
All beings, in some past rebirth, have been one’s close relative, such as one’s mother, or friend. One should look on all beings as if they were one’s only child, i.e. with loving-kindness, and not eat their flesh. In the Brahmajāla Sūtra: “All males are my fathers. All females are my mothers. Rebirth after rebirth, they give me life. All beings are the six realms of existence are my parents. Killing animal for meat is the same as killing my parent, indirectly killing the source of my body.”

3. Development of the loving-kindness

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, when one take the bodhisattva vow, one pledges to work tirelessly in this life and all future lives to awaken oneself and purify oneself in order to help all other beings attain freedom from suffering through spiritual enlightenment. One vows to help beings whenever possible, and a profound way of doing this is to give a being the gift of life through an act of kindness. This can take the form of helping an animal in danger cross the road to safety before being struck by a vehicle or freeing an animal that is in captivity before it is killed by buying it from the captor and letting it roam free. If one is in a position to help save another’s life whether a human or an animal– one must practice fearless kindness to help the other being in danger.

Meat eating and a compassionate religion do not go hand in hand. The Jīvaka Sutta hints that one could also make a good case for vegetarianism starting from any of the other brahmavihāras (loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, equanimity). Interestingly, it is loving-kindness

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rather than compassion that is mentioned first in the Jīvaka Sutta.\textsuperscript{75} It is useful to bear this in mind even if one consumes meat, to resist developing a habit of callousness. Many Buddhists (especially Mahāyānists) practice vegetarianism as a means of cultivating compassion.

The \textit{Suraṅgama Sūtra} tells us that “if we eat the flesh of living creatures, we are destroying the seeds of compassion.” That is, if we do not eat the flesh of living creatures, we are cultivating and irrigating the seeds of compassion, and to “cultivate a compassionate heart,” we chose to become a vegetarian; and this is our main matter for doing so.

Being a vegetarian makes it easier for us to increase our loving kindness and compassion. All living things fear being beaten with clubs. “All living things fear being put to death. Putting oneself in the place of the other, Let no one neither kill nor cause another to kill.”\textsuperscript{76} The Dalai Lama says: “There is just no reason why animals should be slaughtered to serve as human diet when there are so many substitutes. Man can live without meat.”\textsuperscript{77} The Buddha said that “for innumerable reasons, Mahamati, the Boddhisattva, whose nature is compassion, is not to eat any meat”.\textsuperscript{78} Later the Buddha reiterates: “The eating of meat extinguishes the great seed of compassion.”\textsuperscript{79}

As custodians of this planet it is our responsibility to deal with all species with kindness, love and compassion. These animals suffer through

\textsuperscript{75} MN.55.
\textsuperscript{76} Dhp.129.
\textsuperscript{77} Jennifer Horsman & Jaim Flowers, \textit{Please don't eat the animals: All the Reasons you need to be a vegetarian}, USA: Quill Driver Books, 2007: 94.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid. 94.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. 94.
human’s cruelty. However, many people help animals in their spare time. The Buddha vehemently opposed the sacrifices and the animals, slaughter. He has said, “Love all so that you may not wish to kill any.” This is a positive way of stating the principle of *ahimsā*.

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, one of the early texts of the Mahāyāna school contains stories to emphasize the need for vegetarianism, makes an eloquent appeal for vegetarianism and respect for animals. We can see in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, in which a late section has a series of arguments against meat eating.

Despite all we can do, merely to live is to deprive other beings of their food, habitat and life to a certain extent. Therefore, Buddhists practicing the Bodhisattva path should do all they can in their ability to avoid killing, and to protect life instead. Since individual acts of buying meat contribute to this great evil (the demand for meat), some negative consequential value is attributable to each act of buying meat, for each such act causally contributes to the general demand that causes animal suffering.

“When one becomes a vegetarian not out of compassion for all sentient beings, but solely as a means for achieving good health and longevity, the attitude is flawed and the practice remains hollow. Good health comes from disciplined living, good diet, and regular exercise. Like the Buddha, we should practice vegetarianism out of compassion for all

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81 Ibid. 57.
sentient beings. This correct perception and attitude will not only help our mental health, but over time can also improve our physical health.”

If you eat meat, you contribute to the demand for meat and thus spur more killings at the slaughterhouse. Although your consumption of a particular piece of meat does not directly cause the death of the animal that it came from, it does directly contribute to the demand to kill another animal. Meat industries kill billions of animals each year. If you eat meat, you participate in and condone this process, and thus share some of the responsibility for every one of those billions of deaths. The only way to fully remove yourself from the responsibility of killing meat-creatures is to not eat them. We should stop cruel animal raisers.

The life of an adult animal raised for food is much shorter than the life of a similar animal in the wild, there will be more dying per total adult population among these animals than among wild animals of similar species. These animals would never have been born were they not destined for the slaughterhouse. In a vegetarian world we would not have to breed farm animals, but simply allow them the space to live a free life in their natural habitat.

Every living creature longs to live and loathes dying. But we participate in the “survival of the fittest,” as we use our power to take by force the lives of other creatures; we rob them of their lives. And at that moment before death, they experience tremendous hatred. Within their minds they harbor this hateful thought of vengeance: “You are killing me

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now? Well, in the future, I’ll kill you. You are going to eat my flesh? In the future, I will eat yours.” And they hold onto this resentment, until it becomes as deep as the sea and the mutual antagonism is very hard to level. There’s no way to resolve those feelings of resentment.

We should know that the people who eat meat may gain some awareness and may seem to be in *samādhi*, but they are all great *rakṣasas*. When their retribution ends, they are bound to sink into the bitter sea of birth and death. They are not disciples of the Buddha. Such people as these kill and eat one another in a never-ending cycle.

4. Achieving good health and longevity

Protect even the smallest form of life; this is the cause of longevity. In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, there is a story of a novice monk who was near the end of his life span. One day, he saw a group of ants drowning in water and reached out to save them. Through his act of compassion, he gained a long life. All this stories serve as reminders for us to act with compassion. Protecting life is a basic moral principle of being human and is the best tool for transforming anger, violence, and sadness into tranquility.

In the sutra, the Buddha said: “There is the case where a woman or man, having abandoned the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings, and dwells with the rod laid down, the knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, and sympathetic for the welfare of all living beings. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination, in the heavenly world. If, on the break-up of the body, after death instead of reappearing in a good

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destination, in the heavenly world he comes to the human state, then he is long-lived wherever reborn. This is the way leading to a long life: to have abandoned the killing of living beings, to abstain from killing living beings, to dwell with one’s rod laid down, one’s knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, and sympathetic for the welfare of all living beings.”

When we kill the animals to eat them, they end up killing us because their flesh, which contains cholesterol and saturated fat, was never intended for human beings.

Vegetarian argue that a vegetarian diet is healthier. In ancient times, people did not have to eat meat in order to live, and their lifespans were very long. The people of today have such short lifespans because they are so fond of eating nutritious food. Because of that fondness, they eat to the point that they shorten their lifespans. If animals were put here for us to use, then why did they exist before man? Most known animal phyla appeared in the fossil record as marine species during the Cambrian explosion, about 542 million years ago. This point suggests that they must have some purpose that doesn’t include our exploitation of them. If meat is not available, people should not go out and hurt or kill animals in order to eat.

Meat eating leads to a bad rebirth as a carnivorous animal, or a low-caste human; vegetarianism leads to a good rebirth. If no meat is eaten, nobody will destroy life, as there will be no market for the bodies. The Dalai Lama not only saves fish, but even feeds them.

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90 MN. 135.
Vegetarians have stronger immune systems and, on average, live ten years longer than meat eaters do. Eating vegetables keeps the brain young, a chorus of research shows. One recent six-year study in Chicago tested 2,000 seniors, their mental acumen paired off with vegetable intake. Subjects who ate more than two servings of vegetables per day appeared about five years younger by certain indicators than those who ate few or no vegetables. Green leafiest (spinach, kale, and collards) appeared most beneficial.

The food you eat is the main source of the intricately balanced chemistry of our body, and what we eat affects our consciousness, emotions and physical patterns. By eating the flesh of another living being, we are introducing to our body and mind the chemistries of the animal, which include anger, jealousy, fear, anxiety, suspicion, and a terrible fear of death, all of which are bound into the flesh of the butchered creature. For this reason, vegetarians live in a “higher consciousness” (being influenced only by their own thoughts, feelings, desires and fears, not those of a separate, lower being) and meat eaters live in a “lower consciousness” (being influenced by the thoughts, feelings, desires and fears of a separate, lower being). If one wants to live in higher consciousness, in peace and happiness and love for all creatures, then he cannot eat meat, fish, shellfish, fowl, eggs, or the flesh of any animal, or cause damage knowingly or unknowingly, to any other living creature, to advance or sustain his own being.

Vegetarian foods provide us with all the nutrients that we need, minus the saturated fat, cholesterol, and contaminants that are found in meat, eggs, and dairy products. Plant based diets protect us against heart disease, diabetes, obesity, strokes, and several types of cancer. Ultimately, to “eat
“green” and to “be kind,” one needs to go vegan. So humans can live healthy lives ‘without recourse to flesh products.’

The vegetarian diet provides all the nutrients a human being needs. The only exception is the vegan who does not eat any animal products could be missing vitamin B12. This vitamin can be found in miso (fermented soy paste) and shitake mushrooms. The lacto-ovo vegetarian has no problem as animal products contain high amount of B12. The cause of nearly all diseases, especially in developed countries, is not the lack of any nutrients, but rather the excess of too much food and fat. We do not hear on the news of anyone dying from lack of protein or lack of iron or lack of acids. The real problem is too much food and fat. People in developed countries eat too much fat and protein. The excess iron and protein leads to the health problems.\footnote{David N. Snyder. \textit{The Complete Book of Buddha’s Lists: Explained}, Las Vegas: Vipassana Foundation, 2009: 136.}

There is no compelling reason to eat meat, while morality, health, and the environment are all reasons not to kill animals for your pleasure and convenience. Additionally, vegetarianism is a non-action. It takes no real effort to not eat meat. Being a vegetarian is one of the most dramatic ethical improvements we can make in our life compared to the amount of effort it takes. All we have to do is eat a healthy diet, and we are suddenly leading a healthier, moral, eco-friendly life. In order to satisfy one human stomach, so many lives are taken away. We must promote vegetarianism. It is extremely important.\footnote{Dalai Lama, \textit{Live in a Better Way: Reflections on Truth, Love and Happiness}, Renuka Singh (ed.), New York: Viking Compass, 2001: 68.}
Even if meat eaters are spared the big killers that their lifestyle is associated with (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer), their diet may still be robbing them of everyday good health. A meat diet is sure to lead to nagging conditions and ailments. A whole-foods, high-fiber vegan diet, full of grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes, is just the ticket to reduce arthritis pain, ease irritable-bowel disorders, mitigate common back pain, relieve cold and allergy symptoms, and lower risk for gallstones, kidney stones, and heartburn. But perhaps best of all, the vegan life is one free of constipation.

It is likely that we have been eating meat since we first ate solid foods. So we might not have thought much about how many animals have been dying for us. But think about this: if we eat meat, we are participating in the process of unnecessarily killing billions and billions of animals every year, and if we ate less meat, fewer animals would die. If we care for the welfare of living beings other than ourselves, perhaps we should spend a few minutes considering a way to not share in the responsibility for killing so many creatures. There is no reason why we must eat meat. An emerging consensus among health organizations, government health agencies, and nutritionists is that the best diets contain very little or no meat. If you have access to an abundance of non-meat food, you can live a healthy, normal life without eating animal flesh. There is the satisfaction of eating and knowing that one is not contributing to the suffering of animals. Finally, there is the adoption of a way of eating that in many ways is far healthier than a diet relying on animal flesh.96

We know that meat spoils easily, and fish and shrimp begin to become putrid after being left out for just half an hour. Meat and meat products begin

to decay after one hour. Vegetables, on the other hand, can usually be kept for three to five days. Although beans become rancid relatively quickly, the deterioration is very easy to detect and recognize.

It may be easier for some who are new to the vegetarian diet and lifestyle to begin with a regimen that is easier to follow and gradually develop a more pure form of vegetarian lifestyle. Others find that the most effective way to get started is just to jump in all the way and give up all eating of meat, poultry and fish altogether. The key is to take action and do something, to improve your health, to preserve the planet and to live in harmony with the other sentient creatures that share our world with us.

Vegetarian meals are very healthy. Animal foods are higher in fat than most plant foods, particularly saturated fats. Plants do not contain cholesterol. Cornbread, broccoli, kale, tofu, dried figs, great northern beans, and fortified orange juice and soy milk are all excellent sources of calcium. As with iron, vitamin C will help your child’s system absorb calcium efficiently. It takes 8 kilograms of edible plant protein to produce 1 kilogram of edible pig protein. Protein from animals is an acutely wasteful way of feeding humans. Ten vegetarians can live on the same amount of land as one meat eater.97

The consumption of animal products has been conclusively linked with heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and osteoporosis. Cholesterol (found only in animal products) and animal fat clog arteries, leading to heart attacks

and strokes. A vegetarian diet can prevent 97 percent of coronary occlusions.\textsuperscript{98} The rate of colon cancer is highest in regions where meat consumption is high and lowest where meat-eating is uncommon. A similar pattern is evident for breast, cervical, uterine, ovarian, prostate, and lung cancers.

Medical studies prove that a vegetarian diet is easier to digest, provides a wider range of nutrients and imposes fewer burdens and impurities on the body. Vegetarians are less susceptible to all the major diseases that afflict contemporary humanity, and thus live longer, healthier, more productive lives. They have fewer physical complaints, less frequent visits to the doctor, fewer dental problems and smaller medical bills. Their immune system is stronger, their bodies are purer, more refined and skin more beautiful.

It’s says that Calcium, needed for strong bones, is found in dark green vegetables, tofu processed with calcium sulfate, and many other foods commonly eaten by vegans. Calcium requirements for those on lower protein, plant-based protein diets may be somewhat lower than requirements for those eating a higher protein, flesh based diet. However, it is important for vegans to eat foods high in calcium and use a vegan calcium supplement every day.

Most people have been taught that children must eat animal flesh and dairy products to grow up strong and healthy. The truth is that children raised as vegans, who consume no animal products, including meat, eggs, and dairy, can derive all the nutrients essential for optimum growth from