





# Cherishing Life

- volume one -

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Namo Shakyamuni Buddha

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- A translator must free himself or herself from the motives of personal fame and reputation.*
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- A translator must refrain from aggrandizing himself or herself and denigrating others.*
- A translator must not establish himself or herself as the standard of correctness and suppress the work of others with his or her faultfinding.*
- A translator must take the Buddha-mind as his or her own mind.*
- A translator must use the wisdom of the Selective Dharma Eye to determine true principles.*
- A translator must request the Elder Virtuous Ones of the ten directions to certify his or her translations.*
- A translator must endeavor to propagate the teachings by printing sutras, shastra texts, and vinaya texts when the translations are certified as being correct.*



VENERABLE TRIPITAKA MASTER HSÜAN HUA

Cherishing

Life

- volume one -



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## EATING MEAT: PEOPLE EATING OTHER PEOPLE

*-by the Venerable Abbot Hua  
The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas*

For hundreds of thousands of years,  
the stew in the pot  
Has boiled up a resentment very  
hard to level.  
If you want to know why there are  
calamities and wars in the world,  
Just listen to the sounds from a  
slaughter-house at midnight.

This poem is directed toward those who eat meat and drink bouillon made from mutton, or beef, or pork. Or maybe it's cat broth or dog soup, or rat soup. Or maybe it's made from ants or mosquitoes. At any rate, the reason for the ingredients of these different kinds of broth is that for a very long time, people have assumed that they have the right to take the lives of other living creatures in order to enhance their own. In order to bolster their own physical strength and at the same time to enjoy the flavors of flesh, they deprive other creatures of their lives. That's why people eat meat. But the resentment--the anxiety and hatred--contained in that broth is as deep as the sea. That is because life after life we mutually kill and eat, eat and kill--we eat each other's flesh. You eat my meat, and then I will turn around and eat your flesh. We slaughter and devour each other in this way. and that is why the enmity is as deep as the sea, and the "resentment is very hard to level."

Every living creature longs to live and loathes to die. 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 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.

So, "If you want to know why there are calamities and wars in the world"--people all over the world wonder why there are countries that fight with other countries on a world-wide scale. Why do such wars come about? There are man-made wars involving weapons and troops and there are natural disasters of water and fire. Such things happen all the time in this world. Previously it was North and South Vietnam at war; now it's Argentina and Great Britain bombing each other. Why? It's because of too much killing karma--there's such a long history of mutual slaughter which has become so complex that there's no way to clearly reckon the books. So people just strike out at their fellow beings, using modern weaponry, tanks, guided missiles, trying to overpower the strength of the opponent. So, "If you want to know why there are wars and calamities in the world, just listen to the sounds from a slaughter-house at midnight." You'll hear the pigs crying and the cows moaning and the sheep bleating, screaming and wailing, beseeching people to spare them their lives. And when you hear those sounds, you will have a good idea of where the wars and weapons come from.

There's another poem that reads,

In the *Chung Wen* character for  
meat (肉) are two people.  
The one inside has been caught  
by the one outside.  
So when living beings eat the  
flesh of other living beings  
If one really stops to think about  
it, isn't that just people eat-  
ing people?

The *Chung Wen* character for meat (肉), is a picture of a mouth--an open mouth, since the horizontal stroke at its base is missing--and inside the mouth is a picture of a person, while outside the mouth is a picture of another person...waiting. The person outside the mouth hasn't gone in yet. The person inside the mouth would like to escape, but can't. He's stuck inside the mouth. The one in-

side has grown while inside the mouth, so although the enclosure is only three-sided, he can't get out. Why is he stuck there? Basically this is a pictograph of a person being eaten by another person. The one who is eating the meat is on the outside--he still resembles a person. But the one on the inside is already no longer a person. He has turned into an animal. Not only has he turned into an animal, but he's been trapped--detained there. He can't go up and he can't go down; he's stuck right in there. He's as cooped up as if he were in a pen. The pen could be a pig pen, or a sheep pen, or a cow pen. The person on the outside is keeping watch over the pen so that the animal can't escape. He intends to eat that animal's flesh. So the poem reads: "In the character for meat are two people."

And there's another obvious thing about this character: those two people have an irrevocable connection between them. The one eating and the one being eaten have an involvement with each other that cannot be severed because they are bound up in resentment. They'd really like to get at each other.

In this way living beings eat the flesh of other living beings. Think about it. We people are living beings and what we eat is other living beings. So this is a case of living beings eating other living beings. Horses, cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, and dogs are all animals. And all other creatures are also living beings.

There are those who say, "Well, those creatures have been put here by God just for people to eat."

Oh? Well, for whom were people put here to be eaten by? It can't be said that creatures were put here by the gods specifically for people to eat. What's really happening in this case? It's just survival of the fittest. People are more clever and more strong, and they rely on those qualities to usurp the lives of other living creatures by force. Think about the interrelationships involved in eating meat. Isn't it simply a case of people eating people? Since this is the case, let's return to our analysis of that person inside the character for meat who has now turned into an animal--a cow, a sheep, a horse, a pig, a chicken, a dog--any one of the different kinds of animals.

Can you be sure that the animal you are eating has no connection with you? In the *Shurangama Sutra* it says, "Sheep get reborn as people." Well, if sheep can be reborn as people, so can cows, so can horses, and so can pigs. It's just a matter of changing clothes, putting on a different face, and putting on a new head, and then we people don't recognize who those animals are any longer. They have changed clothes, so you don't recognize them. But maybe the one you are eating is an old friend of yours. It's not for sure. But still that's a fairly distant connection, too. Take it a little further: maybe that pig or sheep or cow you are eating was your father or mother in your last life, or some other past life. If, when you are about to take a bite of meat, you consider: "Perhaps this meat I am about to eat is my former father's flesh or my former mother's flesh," can you understand how unfilial it would be to eat that flesh? So, "Isn't it just a case of people eating people?" A person eats a pig's flesh and that person dies, turns into a pig, and the pig he ate returns as a person to eat the former person's pig's flesh. As we go on and on like that, mutually eating one another, the enmity grows deeper and deeper. The more resentment that accumulates, the more we're driven by rage to devour each other.

So now you can see, the desire to eat good things is motivated by a sense of deep resentment and enmity. That is the propelling motion behind the desire to eat delicacies containing meat: the drive to bolster our own lives through the sacrifice of others. People who pride themselves on being "gourmets" are usually driven by very heavy karmic obstacles that spur them on to an ever-increasing gluttony for other creatures' flesh.

Why did I bring this subject up? It's because in this world right now, there are many strange diseases and wars. These weird diseases are created from killing karma--from mutual taking of life. These wars are also the result of mutual slaughter. Therefore, the more people there are who can cease killing and liberate the living, the quicker we can completely do away with wars.





遠書

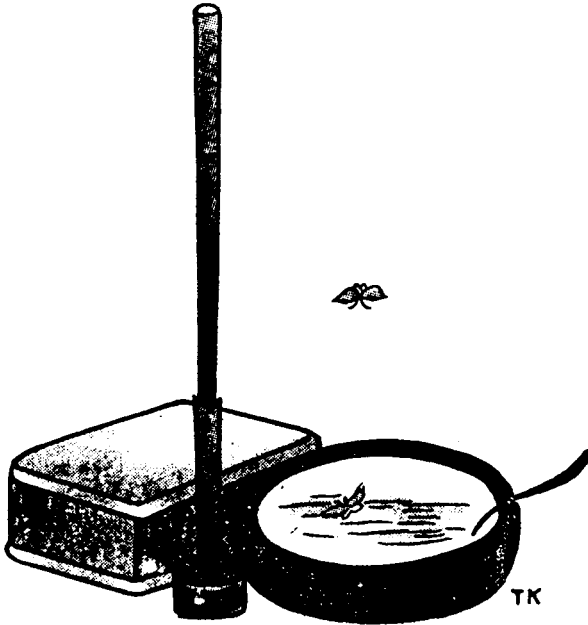


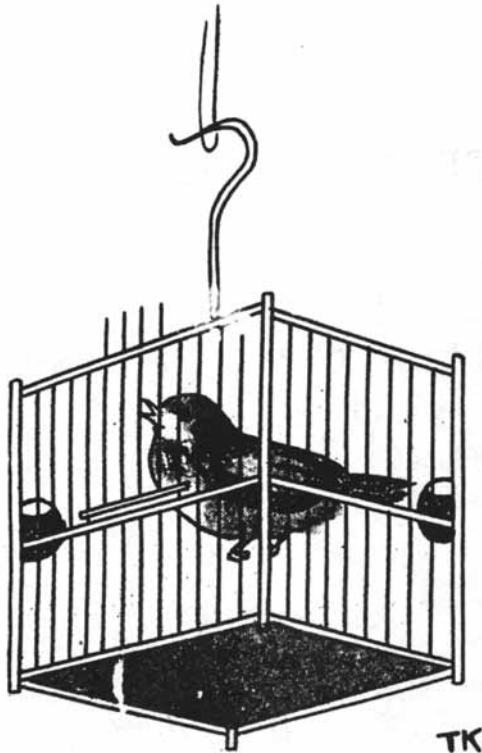
## LAMENT

I sigh as the world fills up with battling,  
And as people's heads go madly a-spinning.  
As we kill more and more,  
Our earth gets covered with blood and  
gore.  
Do not gun down the wild goose heading  
south;  
He may be bringing a letter from afar!

## DROWNING

The moth is drowning;  
It is struggling for  
life;  
Will you lend a helping  
finger  
To cultivate your  
compassionate nature?





## IMPRISONMENT

Why are birds kept in cages?  
There are no good reasons,  
Since men are rational beings,  
They should not exploit others'  
freedom.

## THE SILKWORM'S HORROR

A suit of silk  
Is cool and pretty.  
But think of the millions  
of lives lost:  
Don't you feel it's a  
pity?





## AN APPEAL

For years I have ploughed your field  
and pulled your cart,  
For years you have ringed my nose  
and whipped my back.  
I never grumble but do my job,  
Yet, now you come with a knife in hand,  
I know my last hour has come to an end,  
Won't you consider my record of service  
And allow me to die a natural death?

## FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

When the throats are cut:  
Air rushes in, but not through the nose,  
Blood rushes out through the gaping hole.  
They are not yet dead, yet are sure to die.  
They cannot quack, but they still can sigh.  
As soon as they cease to strive,  
They will be chopped up in no time.  
What kind of experience is it to die?  
Would people like to have a try?

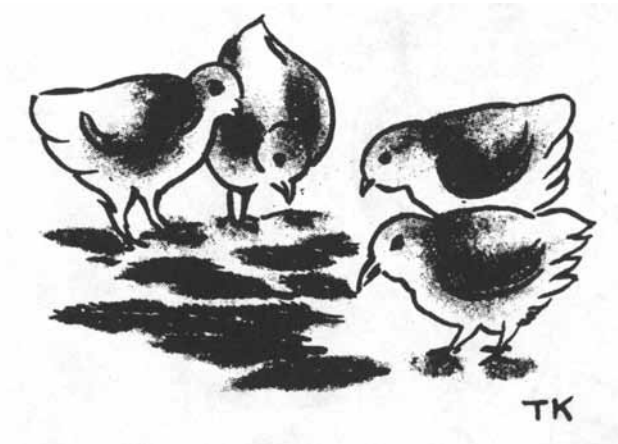




## MOTHER'S PLUME

The odor of their mother  
Brings them to the feathers,  
What baby likes to lose its  
mother?

Do you care for the feelings  
of others?



## TORTURER

Suppose someone ripped off your nails,  
How would you like it?  
When people scrape off its scales,  
How does the fish like it?  
Do not inflict pain on others  
When you yourself would not like to  
endure it.





## OLD MATES

I drank your milk when I was young,  
You ploughed my field when I was grown up,  
Now that you are old and worn-out,  
I will look after you.  
I am not a man with no gratitude;  
No harm will come to you.  
Take a holiday and relax  
Until your years on earth are over.



## ADIEU

As the sun is sinking low  
And petals are softly closing,  
Two birds settle serenely  
Among the evergreens.  
Sudden and swift an arrow soars  
Piercing deep into the chest.  
"Farewell, my darling, forevermore.  
How unexpected is your death!"

見戲其一



## IT IS JUST CHILD'S PLAY

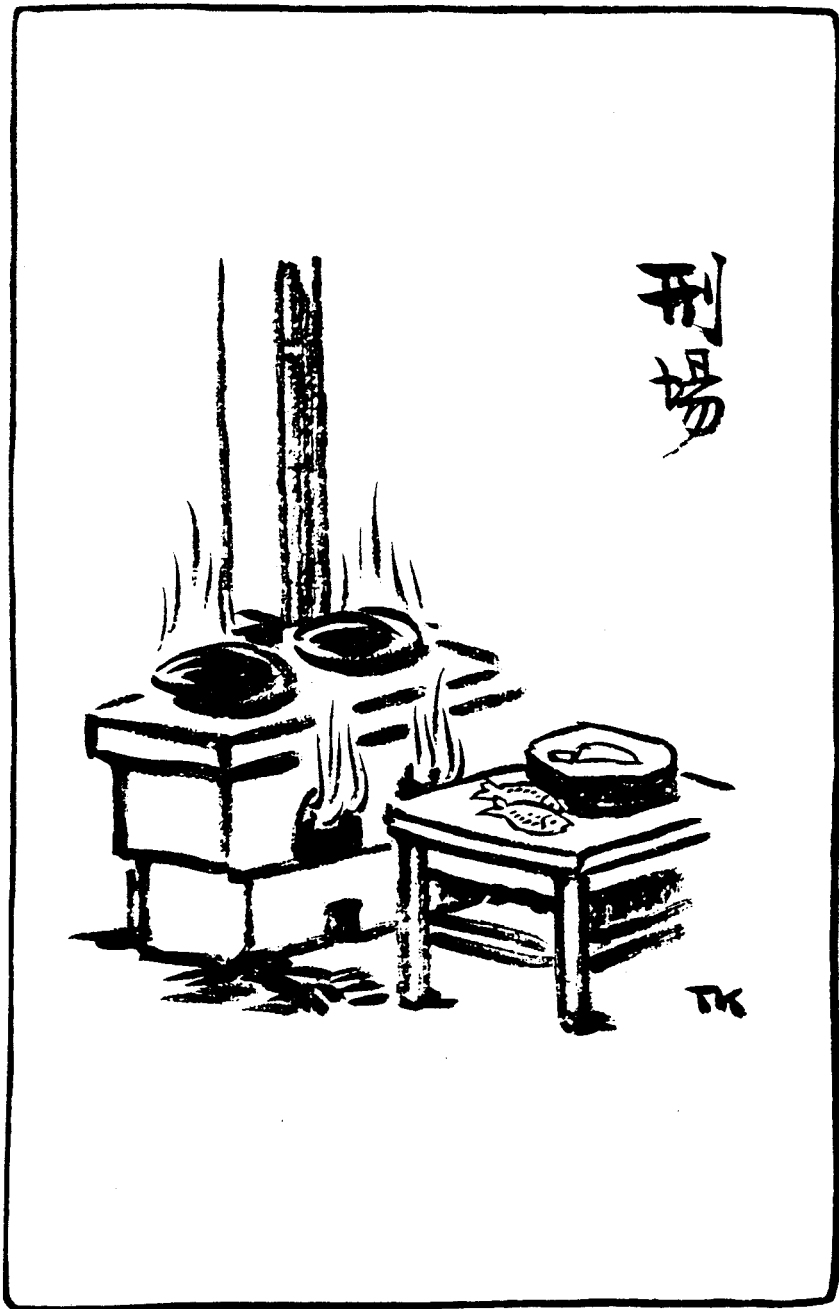
Stun it with a fan,  
Tie a string to it,  
Set it flying like a kite,  
And let it die where it alights,  
If young children are not taught  
to be kind,  
Cruelty will prevail in the  
future adults' minds.





## SHAME

May bygones be bygones.  
Let me start afresh,  
I shall cease to injure  
    any feeble ones,  
And help the weak whenever  
    there's a chance.



## TORTURE CHAMBER

When all the scales are scraped  
off,  
And the body is entirely  
disemboweled,  
Life has not yet ended,  
For fish can still swim,  
When their flesh is chopped  
to pieces  
And thrown into boiling oil,  
The mouth can still gape and  
gasp,  
The tail can still flip and  
flap.  
Can tortures in the hells be  
Worse than those that happen here?



## HELL

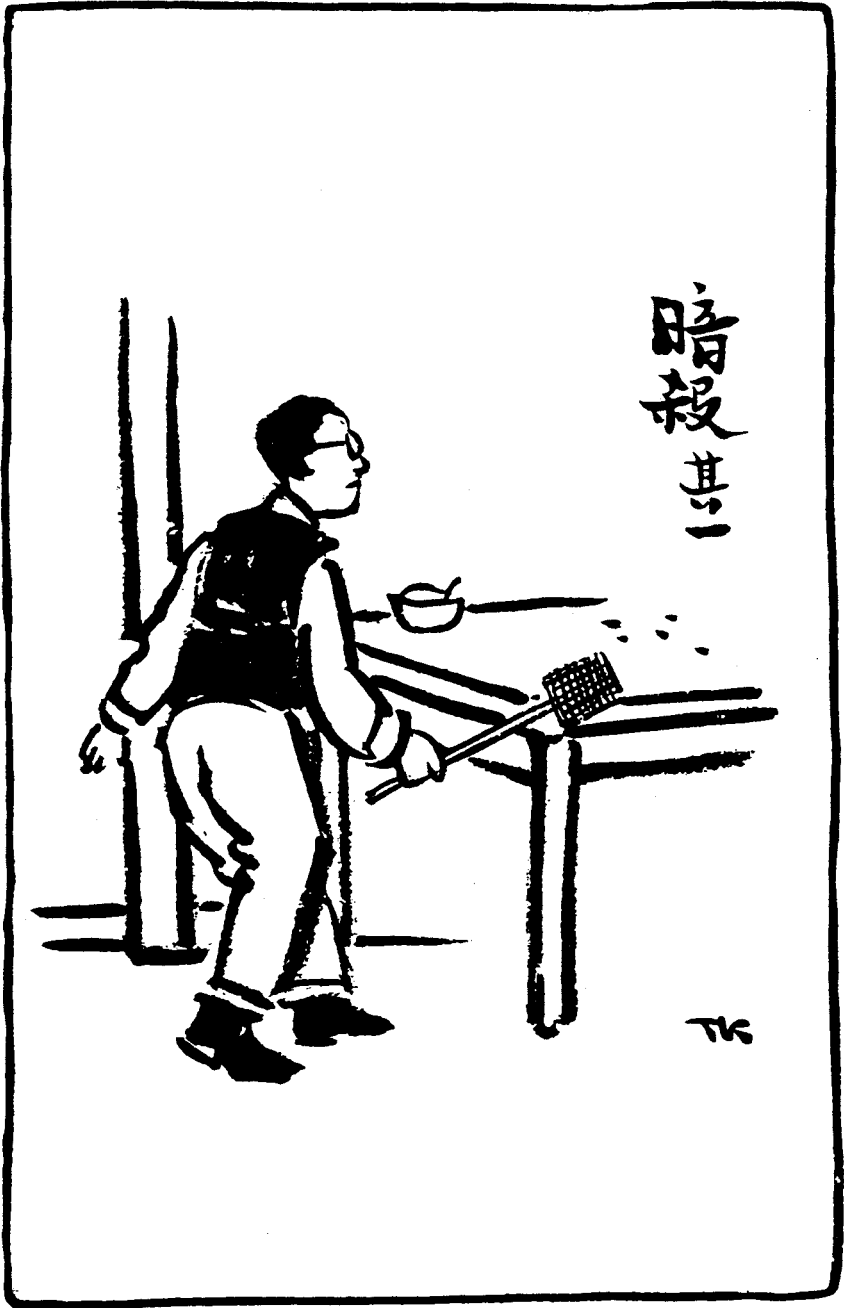
Countless animals every day  
Come under the butcher's sharp blade.  
Cows, pigs, chickens and lambs,  
End up in the gourmet's frying pans.

How fast the knife plunges and slices!  
How painful is the gouging and skinning.  
The guts are out in a moment;  
The head is chopped off in seconds.

The flesh is cut up and broiled,  
Or sauteed in hot sizzling oil.  
But who can hear the sighing and aching  
In the lamb chops or pot roast that's  
baking?

The world fills up with gloom,  
As we harm and slay the defenseless.  
The universe grows darker and darker,  
And our karma gets heavier and heavier.

May all of you humane ones  
Be considerate of all parents and  
children.  
Be mindful of these poor beasts' agony,  
And nourish your own seeds of sympathy.



## MASSACRE

He says that the green flies  
are filthy,  
And deftly whacks them with a  
swatter.  
But isn't this a real pity?  
For he is deliberately destroying  
old friends.

生見芥苜菘  
蘆菘服





## VEGETABLES

Vegetables are good for you.  
They have vitamins, minerals and  
enzymes, too.  
Spinach, lentils, and beans,  
Go well with carrots and peas.

間接的自餵

TK



## INSTALLMENTS FOR YOUR NEXT REBIRTH

If you rear pigs with the plan to kill  
them,  
You'll see love turn into hate.  
If the pigs could read your thoughts,  
They'd certainly not swallow the bait.  
But because you cleverly cheat them,  
And feed on their tasty flesh,  
In the future when you become a pig,  
You'll find out too late  
That cause and effect isn't off by a bit.  
Therefore, I exhort you not to cheat pigs.

"Pig Gatha"

by Ming Dynasty

Great Master Tzu P'o

(Purple Cedar)

!!!



## YOUR OWN CHOICE

To set down your foot and squash  
it flat

Is so easy.

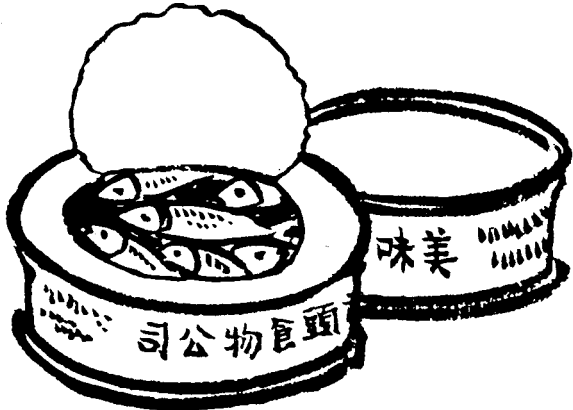
To step aside and leave it in  
peace

Is also very easy.

To be cruel or to be kind

Is a decision that's yours and  
mine.

開  
櫃



## COFFINS

A can of sardines, tuna or  
sausages,  
May often taste quite delicious.  
But aren't you just prying open  
coffins  
And feeding on stinking corpses?

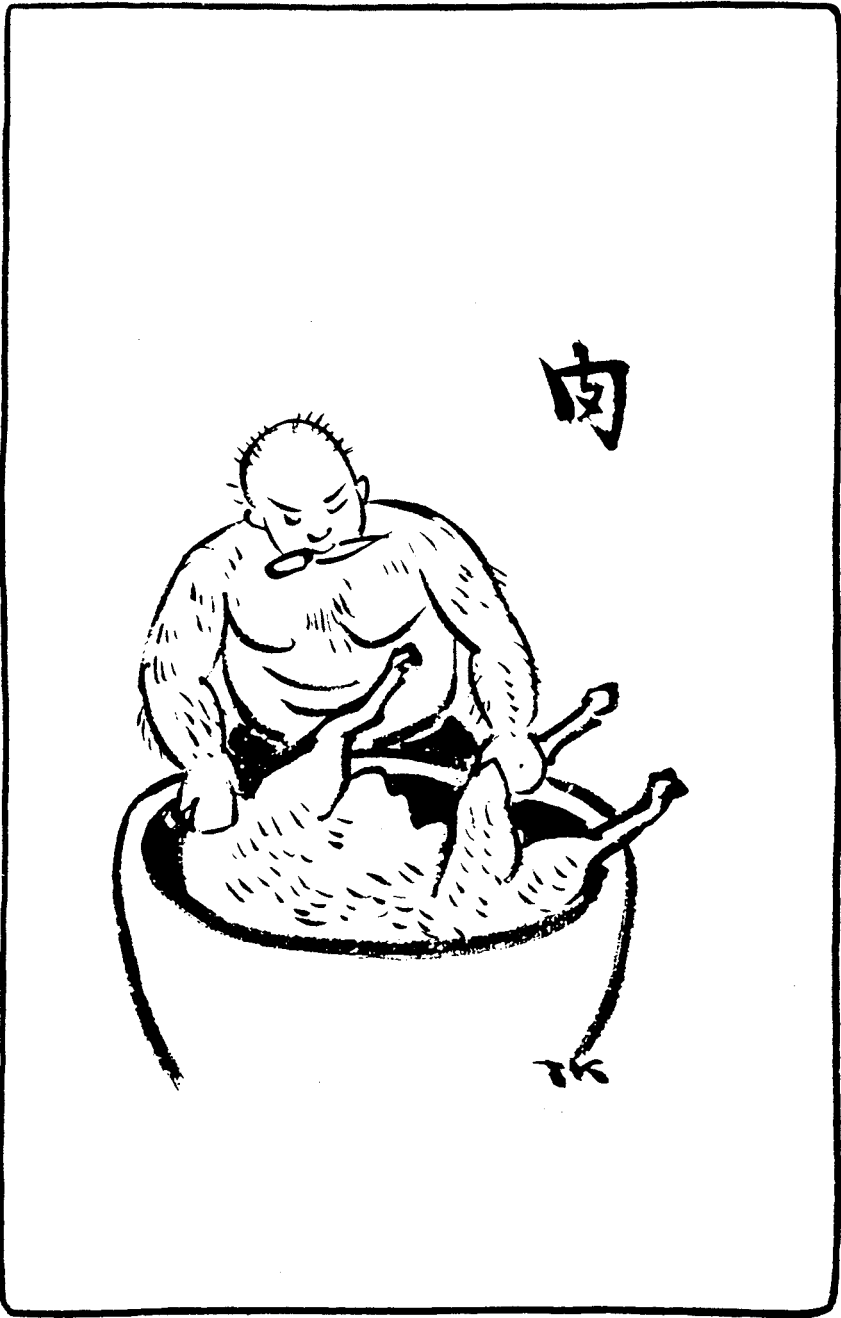


淨水  
楊枝



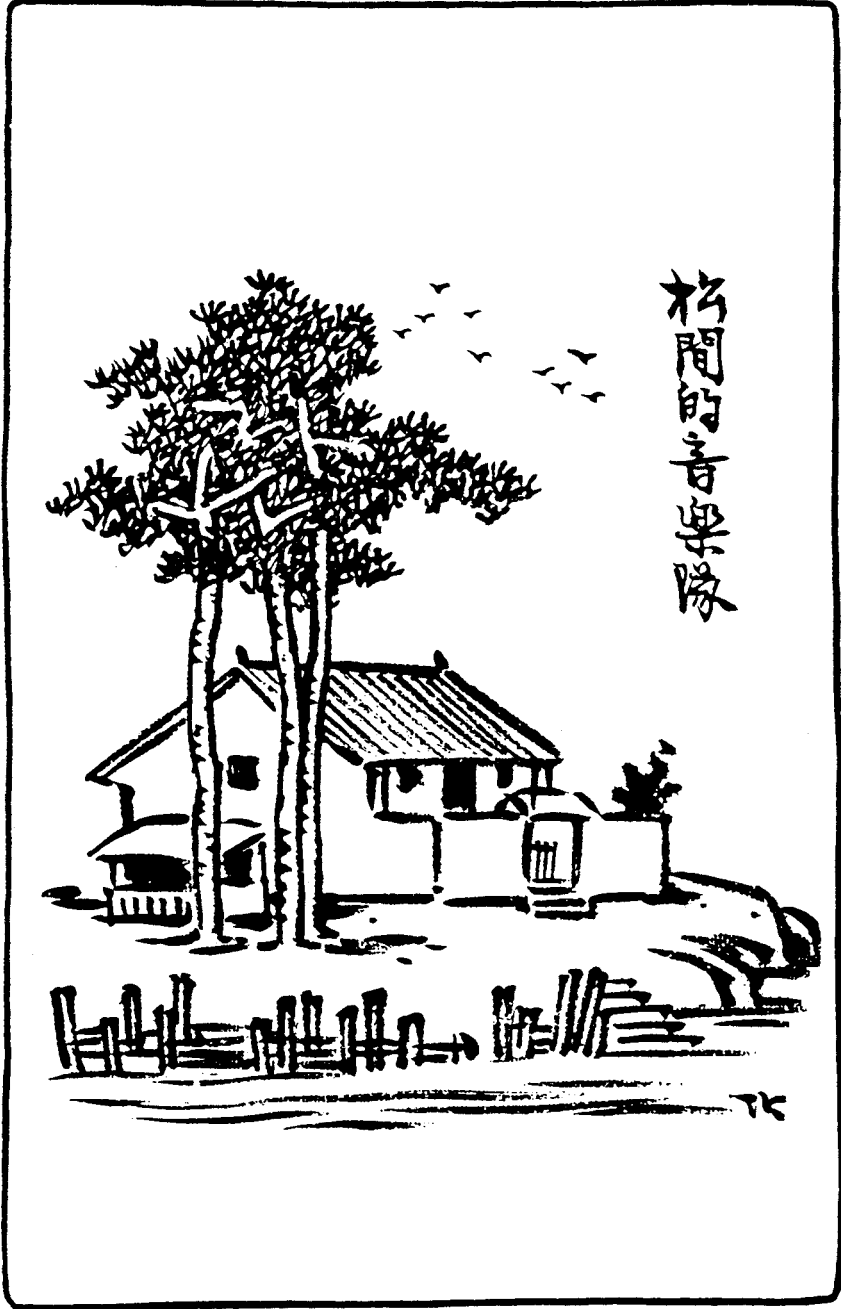
## THE WILLOW BRANCH

With the willow branch, sprinkle pure  
water everywhere,  
Throughout the three thousand world  
realms,  
Benefitting humans and gods,  
So that their blessings and lifespans  
increase.  
Offenses are wiped away,  
Hungry ghosts are saved,  
And red flames turn to lotus flowers,  
Homage to the Bodhisattva Mahasattva  
of the Clear Cool Ground!



## MEAT

In the character "meat," there  
are two people,  
The one outside gobbles up the  
one inside.  
Stop to think it over--  
Isn't it just people eating  
people?



松間的音樂隊

75

## SWEET SOUNDS OF HOME

My home is in a village by  
the river.  
The flowing water babbles  
beside our bamboo fence.  
The pines murmur high above  
our cottage windows.  
Surely this is home, sweet home!

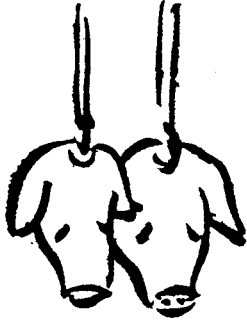
雀巢可俯而窺



## GETTING ALONG

When we don't harm creatures,  
We won't plant seeds of war.  
We'll get along like the  
    sun and moon,  
Surrounded by clusters of  
    bright stars.

喜慶的  
代價





## THE PRICE OF A BANQUET

During a family reunion  
You serve your guests steaming  
    hot bouillon.  
In the midst of joy and laughter,  
Why resort to heartless slaughter?



## MY LEG!

If we abstain from eating  
Ham, sirloin and pork chops,  
Countless lives will be saved,  
Since fewer poor beasts will  
be slain.

暗殺  
其三

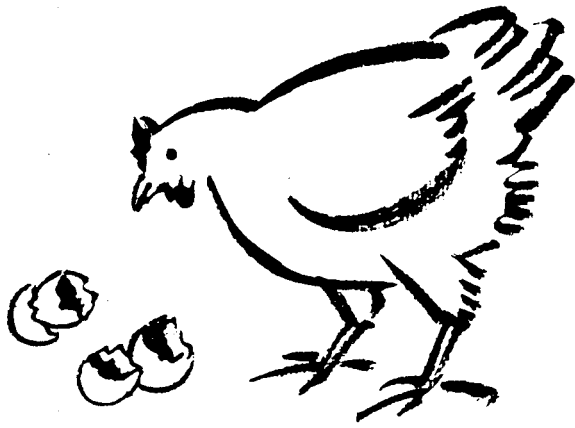


## KIDNAP

The mother bird leaves her babies  
In search of food in the trees.  
A bullet rips through her belly;  
She drops to the floor of  
    the valley.

The hunter returns home whistling;  
The mother bird is dying.  
The hungry nestlings are crying,  
Awaiting a mother who will  
    never come back.

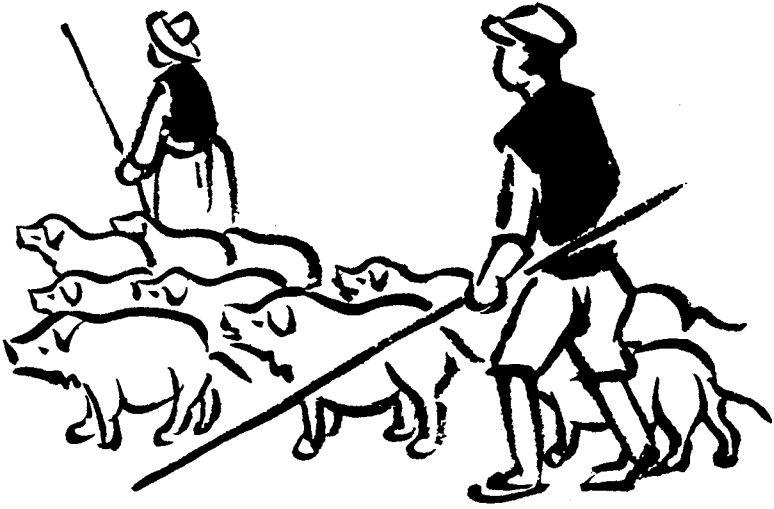
「吾見」  
「!？」



## MY CHILDREN

Mother hen lays some eggs,  
The master takes two for an  
omelet.  
Mother hen gazes at the  
broken shells,  
How bitter her feelings, no one  
can tell.

衆生





FORWARD: MARCH!

People and pigs are both alive,  
Both long to live and  
loathe to die.  
But people are strong and  
pigs are weak,  
So pigs are sent to the  
slaughterhouses  
And prepared for people to eat.  
Do you approve of what people  
are doing?

運糧



## TRANSPORTING FOOD

Little ants transport food,  
And know how to work together.  
Climbing o'er mounds, rocks  
and walls,  
They balance their loads as  
they rise and fall.  
Tiny creatures 'though they be,  
They move with grace in  
co-operation.  
With such firm will and resolution,  
They are sure to reach their  
destination.

自掃雪中歸鹿跡  
天以恐有獵人尋



A LITTLE HELP FOR MY FRIENDS

Living on a high mountain peak,  
I seek the true mind through  
bitter practices.  
Daily, I sweep away the reindeer's  
tracks,  
So that, come morning, hunters  
will not find them.

T'ang poet  
Lu Pu Wang

老牛亦是知音者  
橫笛聲中緩步行



## COMPANY

At the end of day, I blow  
    on my wooden flute.  
Even the old ox likes it,  
Turning around his head,  
As we amble slowly into the  
    sunset.

好鳥枝頭亦朋友

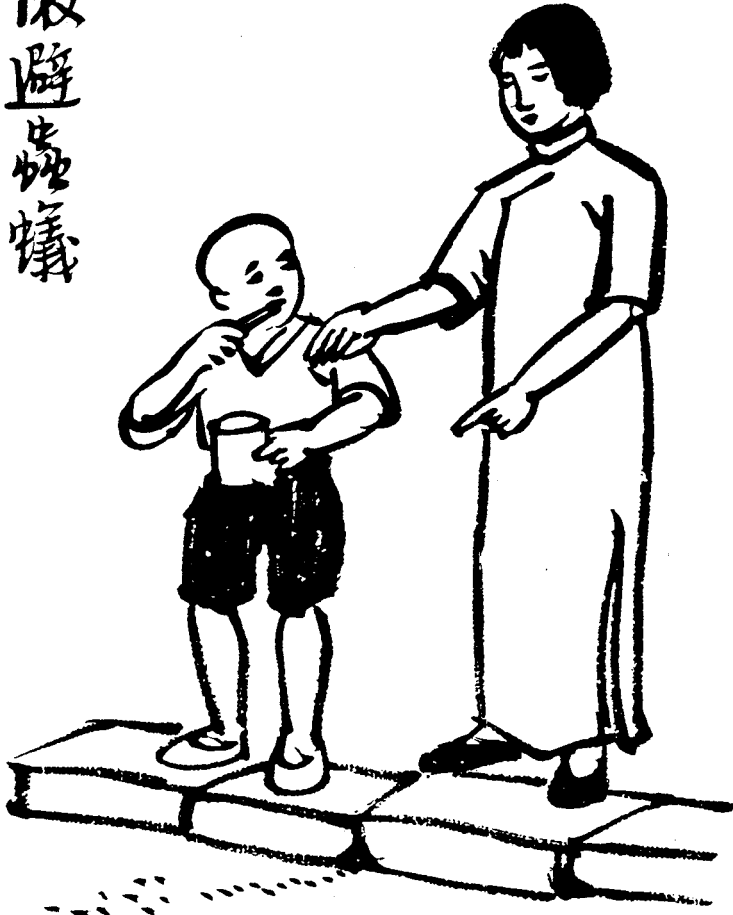




## SONGBIRD

As I sit here alone,  
Who comes to keep me company?  
A bird who chirps merrily,  
His voice pretty and clear,  
Like some kalavinka from the  
heavens.

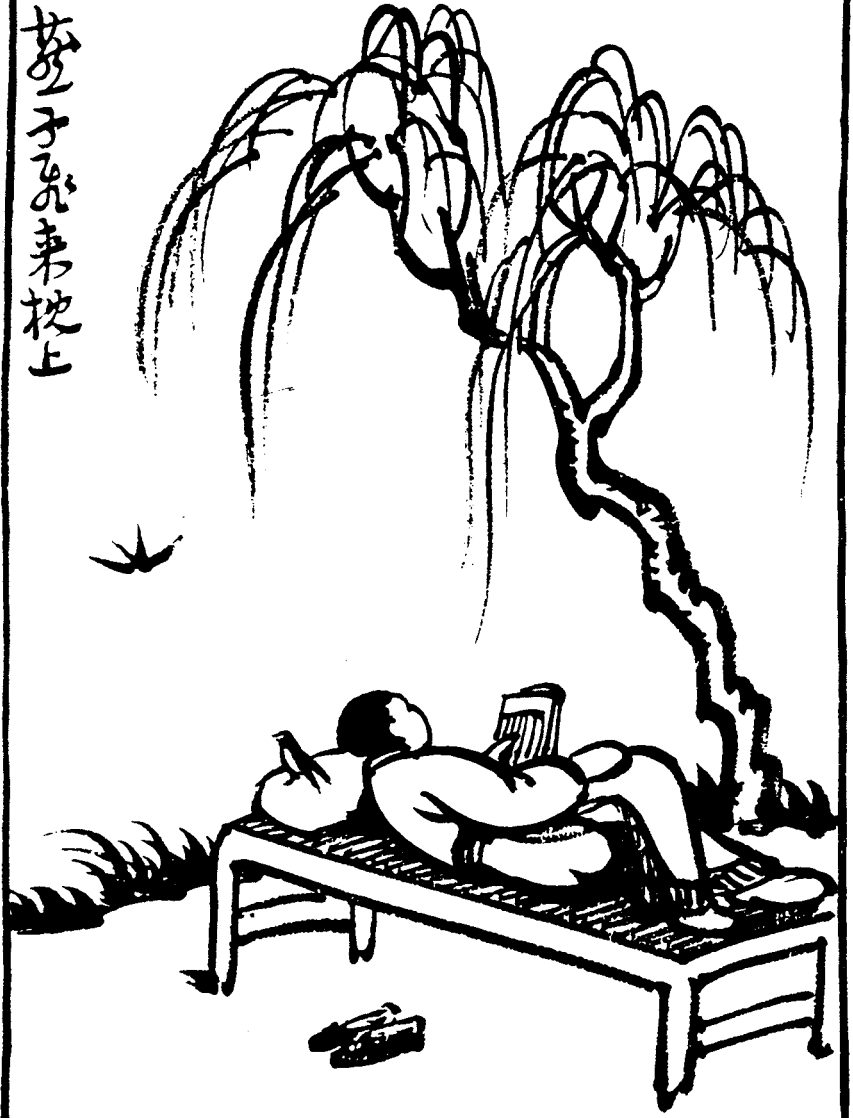
鹽飯避蟲蟻



## CHERISHING LIFE

Even when you brush your teeth and  
rinse your mouth,  
Be sure to not throw the water on ants  
and bugs, or they'll drown.  
This helps you grow in great compassion,  
And brings joy to your every action.

燕子飞来枕上



PEACE

A swallow alights on my pillow,  
And shows no sign of fear.  
'Tis because I don't wish to  
    hurt him.  
So all is serene like the  
    spring breeze.

-by a schoolchild

被棄的小貓



## SYMPATHY

While on the road  
I saw a little kitten  
Suffering from cold and hunger,  
Crying out piteously,  
Like a lost child  
Left alone in the wilds,  
With no home to go to,  
Terrified at the crossroads.  
How could I not pity him,  
And lend him a helping hand?

福負其子





## MAN AND BEAST ALIKE

Just as a mother loves her  
    children,  
A mother hen loves her chicks.  
See how she takes them out on  
    a walk,  
Carrying her youngest on top  
    of her back.

催喚山童為解圍



## RESCUE

Quietly I watched the spider  
spin a big web  
Catching countless insects in  
mid-flight.  
Moths are snared, yellow bees  
are trapped.  
Quickly I call out to the servant  
lad,  
"Help them out of their plight!"



THEY ARE THE EYES OF EQUALS

—TURGENEV—

## EQUALITY

The flesh of living beings and my own  
flesh  
Bear different names but are actually  
the same.  
Originally we are of one nature,  
But are now split up into different  
bodies.

-Sung poet  
Huang T'ing Chien

牛的星期日



## FAIR PLAY

For our own children's sakes  
We've killed too many steer  
for beefsteak!  
Besides, those meals aren't  
even fun  
When we're actually eating our  
past parents and sons.  
The butcher is cruel when he  
plunges his blade;  
There is groaning, squealing,  
and increasing hate.  
Since we are the cause of so  
much bloodshed,  
In the future we will have to  
repay those debts.

溪邊不垂釣





## PROTECTION

By this tranquil river there is no  
fishing.

High up on these mountains, gates stand  
on rusty hinges.

Were we to open our gates, we might  
startle the wild geese.

Setting down bait and tackle would  
surely drive away the fish.

風雨之夜的候門者



## THE DOOR KEEPER

I watch your door  
And keep your house safe.  
Day and night I stand guard.  
The leftovers from your table  
Are enough to keep me content.  
My heart is straight,  
I am loyal and faithful.  
I only want to do a good job,  
And not seek rewards or praise.

我来施食尔垂钩

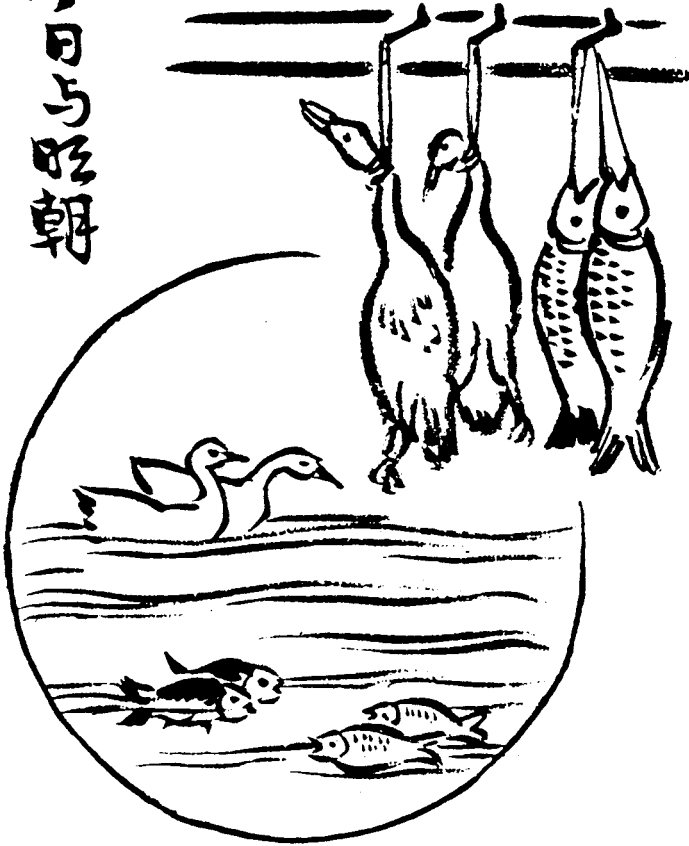


## FISH

Walking around the pond  
I watch the fish swim about.  
Yonder a young lad lets down  
The hook on his fishing rod.  
You could say we share a love  
    for fish,  
But with different aims in mind.  
I came to feed these aquatic  
    beings;  
He came to take their lives.

-T'ang poet  
Po Ch'ü I

今日与明朝



## INSTINCT

All beings--human or beast--  
Love life and hate to die.  
They fear most the butcher's knife  
Which slices and chops them  
    piece-by-piece,  
Instead of being cruel and mean,  
Why not stop killing and cherish  
    life?





## FAREWELL MY FRIEND

For many years I've been feeding  
you,  
Before and after school.  
For many years you've skipped  
around me,  
Before and after school.  
This morning I fed you radishes  
red.  
Tonight I find you tied and  
dead.  
Oh, my friend, you've been taken  
and willfully slain  
To celebrate the occasion of an  
uncle's birthday.  
The blood on the floor will soon  
wash away,  
But the wound in my heart is  
forever engraved.



## NATURAL FEELINGS

When I see those who are alive,  
I do not wish to see them die.  
When I hear their sounds,  
I cannot bear to eat their flesh.

-Mencius-

Bring forth compassion,  
Do not be greedy to fill your  
belly with good flavors.

冬日的同樂



Tk

## A GATHERING IN WINTER

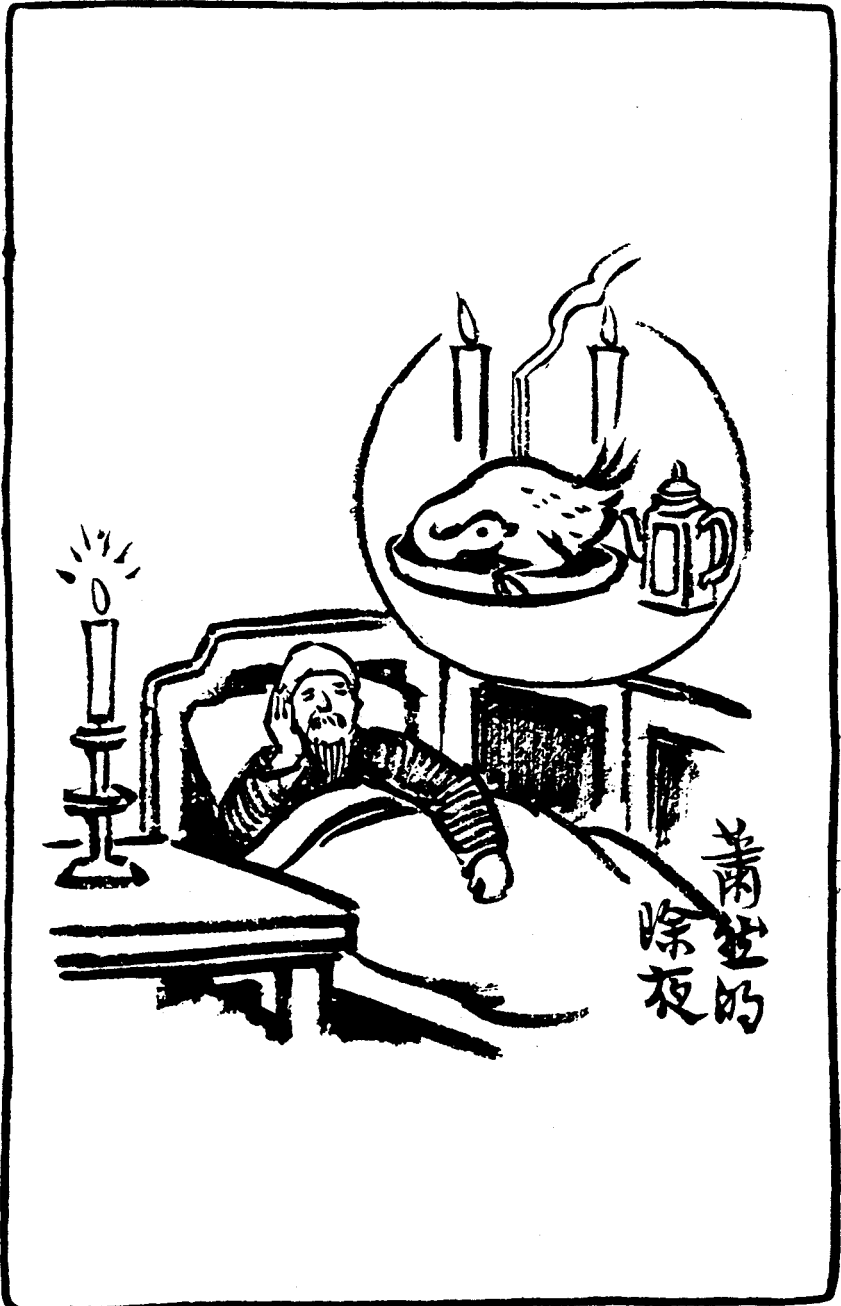
The old vegetarian and his  
grandson  
Are baking themselves under  
the wintry sun,  
The domestic animals see them  
there  
And come around to join them  
at once,  
If everyone lives in good will  
and cheer,  
Mother Earth will thrive in  
joy and peace.

生離歎  
死別歎  
??



## IS IT TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE?

The man is pulling;  
The ewe is resisting  
The kids are bleating:  
"Where is mother going?"  
Mother ewe is wondering:  
"Is this the last parting?"



萧瑟的  
除夕

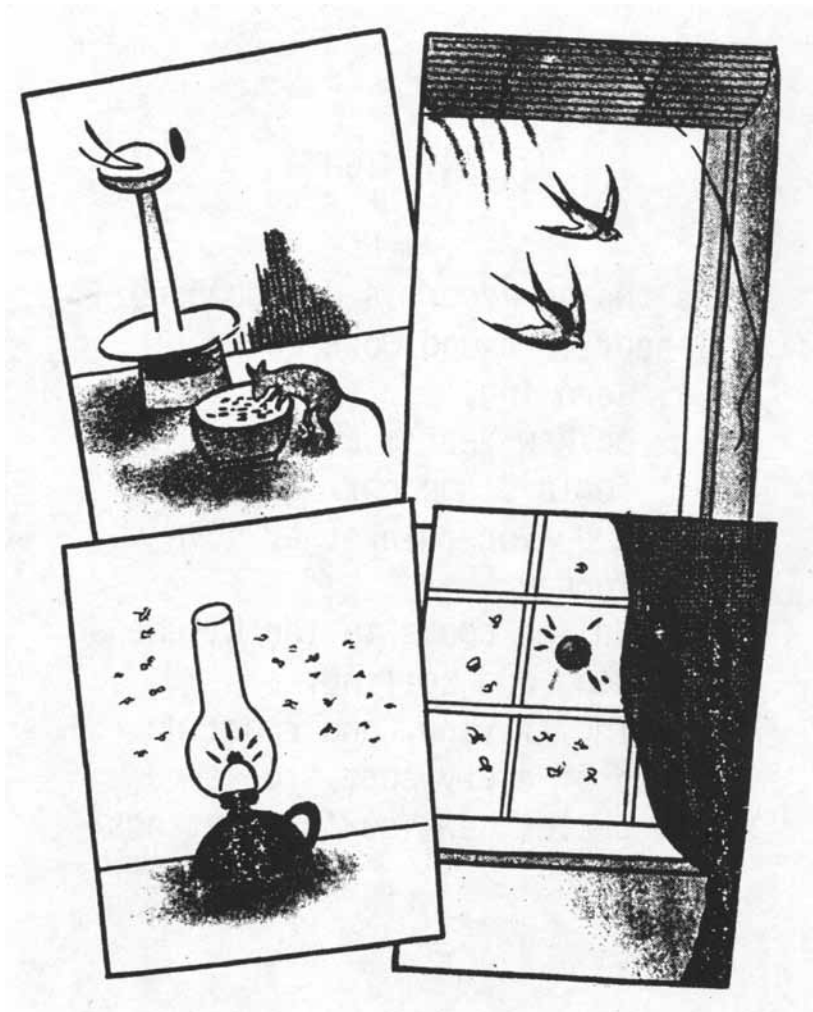


## SILENT NIGHT

As the new year is approaching  
I hear more and more cocks  
    crowing.

But on New Year's Eve,  
All fowls disappear, it seems,  
Where do you think they have  
    gone?

Behold the cooks in the kitchens  
Chopping and boiling,  
Stewing, frying, and roasting  
Birds of every sort, to serve  
As special New Year's Greetings!



## GOODWILL

Unhook the screens and let the  
swallows in.

Open the windows and set the  
foolish flies free.

Leave some rice to feed the  
poor mice;

Blow out the light to save  
the moths.

These are some examples set by  
people

Who regard "nuisances" as neighbors.

## REBORN AS COWS TO SETTLE OLD ACCOUNTS

-from *ANNALS OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS*

-recorded by Great Master

Ngo-I of the Ming Dynasty

In Wu Chou Province of Wu Kuang County there was once a government clerk. One day as he was walking to work he saw a man and two women on the road ahead. As he walked along behind them, he saw all three of them turn off the road when they reached the household of a certain country gentleman and enter his house together.

The government clerk worked within sight of the gentleman's estate. He noticed that the three had still not come back out of the house by that evening and he thought that was strange. Curious, he went and asked the doorman of the estate whether the three had in fact entered the house that morning. The doorman thought he was being rude and took offense and the two started to argue right then and there. The owner of the house heard them arguing and when he heard the clerk's story thought there must be something strange going on. So he asked the butler if there were any new births in the household that day. It was discovered that three calves had just been born in the barn that day--one bull and two heifers.

The owner asked the government clerk to look into the matter. The clerk found that the colors of the three calves were the same as the colors of the clothes worn by the three people he had seen entering the house that morning. Indeed, it was the case that those three people had been reborn

there as calves! Further investigation into the matter brought to light the fact that those three people had owed rent to this family. The bull calf, which was the strongest, was found to have owed the most money, while the heifer with the least strength owed the least money. The strength of the calves corresponded with the amount of money they owed the family. The settling of those accounts was not off by a hair's breadth!

\* \* \*

#### THE CONVERSATION OF TWO PIGS

-from *ANNALS OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS*

-recorded by Great Master

Ngo-I of the Ming Dynasty

In Shung Chiang Province there was once a man by the last name of Chu, who sold pigs for a living. Some time in the first month of the Chi Mou year of the Sung Chen reign period (which began in 1628), during the second watch of the night, he went to the outhouse. On his way, he heard two people talking and suspected there were thieves about, so he grabbed a club and followed the sounds of the voices. To his amazement, he discovered that the conversation was coming from the pigsty! One pig was saying, "This is too bitter to bear! Tomorrow I'm going to be killed."

Another pig spoke up, saying, "You were fated to be a pig for seven lives and this is already your sixth time, so your suffering is about to end.

I am fated to be a pig five times and this is only my first time. The suffering I still have to undergo will go on much longer than what you have left to endure."

When Ju heard the talk between the two pigs, he realized that all animals come from human beings. From that time on, he changed his profession and was no longer in the pig business.

\* \* \*

THE FATHER CREATES KILLING KARMA  
AND THE SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW  
FALL INTO THE ANIMAL REALM

-from RECORDS FOR EVINCING  
BELIEF

During the Kang Syi reign period (1662-1723), there was a certain Wu Te Pu, owner of a pig-selling business in Hang Jou Province, who had been engaged in butchering and selling pork for over thirty years. During the year of Ping Tzu of that period, the butcher's son and daughter-in-law died within six months of each other. In the ninth month of that same year, Te Pu and his wife had identical dreams one night in which their son and daughter-in-law came back home. Te's son was dressed in white, with a black belt girding his waist. The daughter-in-law was dressed in brown. They told the Wu couple, "We have been reborn as dogs in the Sya family in the next town. Will you come and see us? You will recognize us by the color of our clothes." The dreams startled the

couple from their sleep and early the next morning they set out to find the Sya household.

It happened that on the same night, the Sya couple also had dreams about the young couple recently deceased. In their dreams, the Syas asked them, "You are the son and daughter-in-law of the Wu's. Why have you come here?"

The young couple answered, "We have come here to be reborn. We pray that you will take pity on us." At that point the Sya couple both saw, in addition, two other men and one other woman rush into their house. At that point, they awoke with a start and discovered that they had been having identical dreams.

That next morning when the Wus arrived, they asked, "Did your daughter-in-law give birth?"

The Sya couple replied, "No, our two daughters-in-law aren't even pregnant, but the female dog has just given birth to a litter of puppies."

The Wu couple was shown the litter and there among the three male and two female puppies was a white male with black around its waist and a brown female--the colors of the clothing the son and daughter-in-law had been wearing in the dreams. Deeply distressed and unable to keep back their tears, the Wus related their dreams of the night before. The Syas were astounded and related the details of their own dreams of the same night.

When those two puppies were weaned from the mother dog, they were taken back to the Wu family to be raised there.

## UPDATING ACCOUNTS IN THE UNDERWORLD

-from *ANNALS OF SIGHTS AND  
SOUNDS*

-recorded by Great Master  
Ngo-I of the Ming Dynasty

In Hu Bei Province there was a scholar who was very public-spirited and had a straight and righteous mind. The Lord of Heaven appointed him to serve the King Yama of the Seventh Court. (In the Underworld there are ten King Yamas, each of whom has jurisdiction over a specific realm.)

One day, as the scholar was reviewing the records of people's merits and offenses, he noticed an offense logged under his wife's name. It showed that she had stolen a chicken belonging to her neighbor. The bird's weight of one pound and twelve ounces was also recorded. The scholar made a mark in the margin by the entry and, upon returning to the realm of the living, asked his wife about it.

His wife explained, "The neighbor's chicken came into our yard and pecked at some food I was laying out to dry in the sun. In trying to shoo it away, I accidentally hit it and killed it. Fearing that the neighbor would make a big fuss about it, I just hid the dead chicken."

She retrieved the carcass and when they weighed it, they found it to be exactly the weight recorded in the Underworld files. They immediately reimbursed the neighbor for the loss.

The next time the scholar went to the Underworld to work on the files, he checked and saw that at the place on the page where he had marked the margin, the offense had already been erased.



## THE HORSES' SORROWFUL LAMENT

-from RECORDS COMPILED IN THE  
GRASS HUT OF YUEH WEI

Ji Ren Chu, of Jyau He Province, was once on his way to attend the civil exams. He spent the night in an inn by the Stone Gate Bridge. His room was right next to the stables. In the middle of the night, the horses started talking among themselves. One horse said, "Only now do I know the suffering that slow starvation brings! This is my retribution for cheating and buying inferior horsefeed when I was a stableman."

Another horse said, "We are all people who tended horses in our past lives and are undergoing retributions for the mistakes we made. Now we know, but when we were people we didn't wake up!"

One horse complained, "The Lords of the Underworld are not fair. For instance, why is it that Wang Wu got reincarnated as a dog?"

Another horse answered, "The Underworld officials explained the reason. They said it was because while he was still a person, Wang Wu's wife and daughters committed adultery and in addition stole his money and gave it to their lovers. Because he had to endure that suffering and take those losses, his own offenses were partially paid off in that very life."

Another horse spoke up saying, "The gravity of offenses really does bring different retributions. For instance, the man, Chyang, was reborn as a pig seven times in a row and had to undergo

the suffering of being hacked to pieces each time. From that you can see that his offenses were heavier than ours."

At that point, Mr. Ji coughed lightly and the horses immediately stopped talking. The details of this encounter were often related by Mr. Ji during the rest of his life.

\* \* \*

### FISH AND MUSSELS REPAY A DEBT OF KINDNESS

- from *JOY IN LIVING*

Yuan Ch'i Beng of Hang Jou Province made a vow in his youth that he would always liberate the living. He was particularly fond of liberating mussels, clams, roe, and the like, for it didn't take much money to ransom these small sea creatures and so in one outing he could set free many lives. He also encouraged others to do likewise. In the year 1680, while at sea, the ship he was on ran into some reefs and capsized. Strangely enough, however, water did not seep into the vessel at all. Floating on its side, the ship finally reached safety, where it was discovered that several tens of thousands of little fishes, clams, and mussels had congregated beneath the ship, keeping it afloat so that the water could not enter and sink it. Yuan understood that these must be the sea creatures that he had set free--that they had come to repay the debt of kindness and save his life in turn.

## HE REMEMBERS EVENTS OF THREE LIVES PAST

-from *WRITINGS OF YUNG AN*

Mr. Wang Syi Wu was a scholar-official of the Ch'ing Dynasty. When he was serving as county magistrate of Szechuan Province, his superior was Magistrate Niu, whose left hand was in the shape of a horse hoof. Magistrate Niu could remember the events of his three previous lives. He told Mr. Wang about them: "In one of my past lives I was a military officer. Because when I invaded the aborigines in the frontier regions I massacred too many people, I had to be reborn as a horse after I died. My heart was so distraught and crazed as I was housed in the stables that I jumped and neighed and refused to eat. In that way I starved myself to death, but since my offenses still weren't completely paid off, I was again reborn as a horse. In that life I dared not seek my own death again. I was the steed for a calvary officer. My master had a mean temper and constantly whipped me. One day at the battlefront the enemy came rushing at us from behind, hot in pursuit. I carried my master on my back and galloped as fast as I could. The enemy was gaining on us as we approached a deep mountain chasm over ten feet wide. On the other side were sharp protruding rocks that looked like daggers. I knew that if I leapt over that chasm, even if I were to make it to the other side, I would certainly die on the rocks. But if I didn't leap, then the officer on my back would fall into the hands of

his pursuers. I made a split-second decision and leapt. Landing on the other side, my stomach was punctured by the sword-like rocks and I died on the spot, but the officer made good his escape.

"The lords of the Underworld were moved by my decision to sacrifice my life out of loyalty to my master, so they decided I could be reborn as a person next time and in addition would become a fourth-grade officer. When I was reincarnated as a horse for the first time, the ghost-jailer stretched a horse hide over my body. Now, as I was to be reborn a person, he had to rip the horse skin from my body. But the skin got stuck to my flesh and so the ghost-jailer had to use a sharp lance to slice through the parts that were stuck. The pain was unbearable. By the time he came to slicing the flesh which was joined to my hoof, I couldn't take the pain anymore and retracted my hoof. In that instant, I assumed a human body. However, because I had withdrawn my hoof before it was cut clean away, that part did not assume a human form as it should and that's why I still have a horse's hoof in place of my left hand."

From this account we can see why the Sutras describe the agony at the moment of birth and death in the following way:

The pain of birth is likened to that felt by a live turtle when its shell is ripped off.

The pain at death is likened to that felt by a cow when it is skinned alive.

Moreover, Magistrate Niu knew the time of his own departure in his present life. He said, "I know that on such-and-such a date I will go." When the time came, he wasn't off by a hair's breadth.

\* \* \*

HOW WANG'S LIFE WAS LENGTHENED  
BECAUSE HE RESCUED OTHERS

-recorded by Yu Dou

Mr. Tang Yuan Su relates: When my father was magistrate of Yang Jou, we had a watchman by the name of Wang Syl. When he was in his fifties, he died from an illness. When the illness finally took his life, Wang saw two policemen coming for him who said, "There is a court summons for you." Wang went along with them. After they passed the courthouse they headed west and entered the temple grounds of the deity who ruled the city. There, beneath the shade of a large ginko tree by the temple's door, many stools and tables were set up. The policemen said, "This is the tea house of the Bai family."

Suddenly a loud voice boomed from the court bench and the policemen ordered Wang to kneel. An officer said, "Originally this person's lifespan was supposed to end today. However, twenty years ago he saved two lives. Therefore, his lifespan will be increased by twelve years. Take him back to the sunny world."

Thereupon, the policemen took Wang outside. Wang lost his bearings for a while as they were returning and then suddenly a person appeared whose face resembled that of a cartwheel. In a loud voice he shouted, "Quick! Run!" Wang leapt up in alarm, only to find himself awake in his bed. He had broken out in a cold sweat and immediately recovered from his illness.

After he related his encounter to our family, we asked him about the two lives that he had saved. Then he remembered, "Some years ago, when some rebellious armies were invading this part of the river, I came across an old woman and a young girl who were lying by the side of the road. The young girl was the daughter of the county magistrate and the old woman was her nurse. The magistrate had already been killed in the rebellion and the two women were homeless. I took them to a place where homeless people were looked after and thereby saved them from death. But it never occurred to me that by that act I had accrued some merit."



AN OLD MAN TALKS ABOUT  
HIS PAST INCARNATIONS AS PIGS

Several decades ago, in a northern village of the Je Ning County, there was an old man named Yau, who made a living by making strings to tie up dumplings. He lived directly opposite the village drugstore. As he worked, he only used one hand, always keeping the other one tucked away in his sleeve. People thought it strange. One day a youth pulled the old man's hand out of his sleeve and to his amazement beheld a pig's hoof! The old man started to weep and said, "I remember how I was reborn three times as a pig. I ate silt and mud, was cold and hungry all the time, and endured extremely bitter suffering. Moreover, I will never forget how when I was about to be butchered I yelled and screamed, pleading for my life and trying in vain to escape. When the butcher's sharp knife pierced open my throat I fainted from the excruciating pain. When he began to cut up my pig's flesh, it was even more agonizing." At that point in his narration the old man became so distraught and was weeping so hard that it was barely possible to make out his words.

"This agony continues even after death until all the meat has been sold. During the last time I was a pig, after I was butchered, one hoof was left on the meat counter and nobody came to buy it for a long time. The pain became unbearable to

the point that my spirit jerked away, abandoning the pig's hoof, spun around in a daze, and entered a human body. That's why this pig hoof never got switched for a human hand.

"At the time of my birth, my mother saw a pig running toward her. As I grew up, I was the laughing stock of the entire village. No matter where I run and hide, people eventually find out." Having said that much, the old man collapsed in great distress. A few days later he left the village and went elsewhere once again.

This account was related by Mr. Jeng, the owner of the drug store across from where the old man lived, who personally witnessed the event.

#### DREAMING THAT PIGS ASSUME HUMAN FORM AND BRINGING FORTH THE RESOLVE TO STUDY BUDDHISM

Hwang Dau Lung, station master at the Kun Mountain Railway station, relates the reasons that led to his bringing forth the resolve to study Buddhism. One night he dreamed that many carcasses of pigs turned into human form. The carcasses in the butcher shops and restaurants all looked like human bodies suspended from the meat racks, such that a pig's head was actually a human head, and so forth. From that time onwards, Huang found the stench of meat so repulsive that he wanted to vomit everytime he came near the smell. He realized that all animals came from human beings. His good roots sprouted and he became a vegetarian.

\* \* \*



## HOW WONG JIEN WAS NABBED BY MISTAKE

-from *RECORDS OF RETRIBUTIONS*

Great Master Ling Yin Hui relates:

Wang Jien of Su Jou Province was a cautious man of upright character. One day he died for no apparent reason. His spirit followed a youth dressed in a black robe and descended into the Underworld. There, King Yama reviewed his case and pronounced that this was not the Wang Jien in question. The jailors should have summoned a Wong Jien who lived in Shantung Province. Therefore, this Wang Jien was to be taken back to the sunny realm. On his way out of the big hall, Wang caught a glimpse of billowing, black smoke issuing from the hells and heard the howls of agony and cries of anguish from the people being tortured there.

Amidst all that, he saw three monks seated on top of a large tree. They had only to sprinkle the fumes with pure water and immediately the screaming would come to a halt. Wang Jien took a closer look at the three monks and found that they resembled Kuan Yin Bodhisattva, Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, and Earth Store Bodhisattva. Moreover, Wang Jien had known Vinaya Master Mo Ling when the latter was alive. Now, in the Underworld, he also saw the Vinaya Master, still wearing his Kashaya sash and holding a tin staff of compassion in his hand. He looked exactly like he had when he was alive. Wang Jien recorded these experiences in his journal.

BEING REBORN AS A PIG AS A  
RESULT OF EATING CHICKEN

-from RECORDS OF THE GRASS HUT  
OF YUEH WEI

Mr. Chi Wan Ta said, the Aunt of Wang Wen An is one of the five younger sisters of my mother. She recalls an incident from her youth:

"This happened during the time prior to my marriage. One day while I was sitting in the Sail Reflections Tower, I saw a government boat on the river. A middle-aged woman was hunched over one of the portholes and was weeping as if her heart was broken. Around her, many spectators gathered. My nanny came and told me that the weeping woman was the wife of a county magistrate. That day during her afternoon nap, she had dreamt that her recently deceased daughter was bound up and about to be killed. The daughter was crying pitifully and apparently going through tremendous anguish. The woman awoke, startled from her sleep, and could still hear the sobs of her daughter in her ear. The cries seemed to come from the next boat. The woman sent her maidservant to investigate. It was discovered that in the next boat a little piglet had just been killed. In the dream the woman saw that her daughter's legs were bound up with red strings, and now she found out that the strings around the piglet's feet were exactly the same color. She realized that this piglet was a reincar-

nation of her daughter, and became struck with grief. Then she bought the piglet and buried it. The servants of that family said that the young daughter died at the age of sixteen. She was of a gentle and compliant nature, but she loved to eat chicken. Every day a chicken was slaughtered especially for her. Her story was clearly a case of the retribution for killing karma.

\* \* \*

#### NOT FORGETTING THE EVENTS OF PAST LIVES

-from *RECORDS OF THE GRASS HUT  
OF YUEH WEI*

Mr. Chi Wen Ta said, "The revolving wheel around the six paths is an absolute fact. For example, the Uncle of Heng Lan Tai was only a few years old when he himself proclaimed, 'Last life I was a monk in the Temple of Longevity at the West City.' Moreover the child would take a brush, and draw out on a piece of paper the entrance way to the Buddhahall, the corridors, as well as the gardens and the general layout. However, he would never venture into that temple. The reason is unknown."

THE MEMORIES OF PAST LIVES DIM  
AS ONE GROWS OLDER

-from RECORDS OF THE GRASS  
HUT OF YUEH WEI

Mr. Chi Wen Ta said, "My relative, Yuan Yu Ku, studied in the same school with me when we were children. He said that when he was around three or four years old, he could remember the events of his past life. By the time he reached five or six, the memories became blurry. Now, he only remembers that he was an officer of a certain rank, and that his homeland was not far from Long Mountain. But his former name, native province and the details of his home life have all been forgotten. Moreover, Yuan said that when he was about four to five years old, he could see things at night as clear as day. But when he got to be seven or eight years old, everything became obscured. By the time he reached ten years of age, he could see nothing unusual anymore. As he grew older, he would experience these unusual states occasionally. Sometimes in the middle of the night, upon awakening he would see a series of images in a flash, but instantaneously they would fade, and he would not be able to retain them. From the age of sixteen until the present, these visions would still appear once every one or two years, but like a lightning flash, they would disappear all too

quickly. The reason is that as desire increases, our originally bright, divine nature gets obscured, so that what used to be very vivid memories from past existences and visions from other realms get covered over.

\* \* \*

THE PEDDLER WHO WAS REBORN AS A DONKEY  
TO SETTLE PREVIOUS DEBTS

-from *RECORDS OF THE GRASS HUT  
OF YUEH WEI*

A verse by Mr. Syin Tan Pu says,

Who says that events within the  
six paths are unknown?  
People change places with sheep  
in unending swiftness.  
The three-stringed fiddle plays  
a melody of the frontier land.  
I have personally seen the black  
donkey cock up his ears.

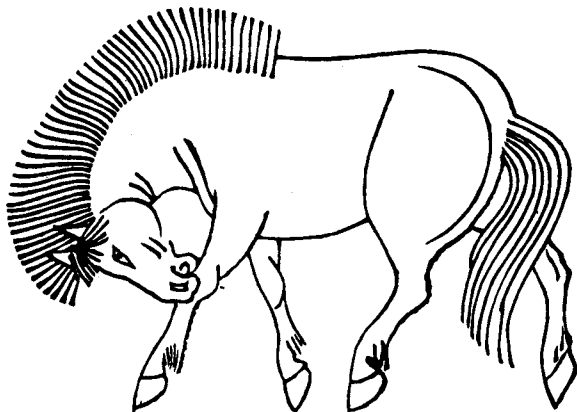
During the reign of the Emperor Kang Syi (1662-1723), when Mr. Syin was acting as tutor in our family, he wrote this poem. There was a peddler who had borrowed money from my grandfather but had never paid it back. He had also told some lies about my grandfather. My grandfather was an extremely broad-minded man, and he waved the entire thing off with a smile. However, one day,

awaking from his afternoon nap, he told my father Yao An, "You remember that peddler who is now dead? I just had a dream about him. He has just been reborn as a donkey in our stables, to come to repay his debts."

Then my grandfather mused, "Those who owe me money are many. Why is it that this peddler has to repay his debts in this fashion? Moreover, he owes money to many families, not just me, so why has he come to be reborn in my household? Perhaps it is just a coincidence. Let's not make a scene of it and cause embarrassment to his kin."

Afterwards, whenever the stable boy called out the name of that peddler, the donkey would raise up his head and make a show of fretfulness. When he was alive, the peddler liked to play the three-stringed fiddle and sing songs of the frontier regions. And now, whenever people played those tunes, the donkey would cock up his ears and listen intently.

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## EVIL PEOPLE ARE REBORN IN THE ANIMAL REALM

-from *THE WRITINGS OF WEI  
HSIANG CHU*

There was a villager Shu Sying Yuan from the Yi Sying County, who upon his death was reborn as an ox. On his back there was a tuft of white hair which grew in the shape of the characters "Hsu Hsing Yuan."

In the same county there was a man named Ren Pe Yi, who engaged exclusively in evil and cruel actions. His relatives and friends were as afraid of him as if he had been a wolf. Upon his death he was reborn as a pig. Underneath the pig's stomach was a white tuft of hair on which this person's name was clearly imprinted.

A similar case was that of Pan Ah Hsi, who refused to pay back the money he owed to the Chiang family, who earned their living running a ferry boat. On his death bed, he said to his wife, "When I die, I will be reborn as a dog in the boat of the Chiang family as a punishment. I will have a black-colored head and yellow fur." The next day his wife went to the Chiang's boat. Sure enough, she discovered a litter of newly born puppies. There was one among them with a black head and a yellow coat who raised his head and yelped piteously to the woman. The wife could not bear the sight of her husband reborn as a dog. She paid back the debt and carried the dog back to her own house.

\* \* \*

SECRET EVIL ACTS THAT LEAD  
TO REBIRTH AS A DOG.

-from *THE SHORT RECORDS OF  
CH'ING TAO*

Mr. Shu Feng Chi said, "The official Chen at Ten Thousand Pine Peak was sitting on the balcony cooling himself one summer day, when suddenly he saw a group of people on the road. There was a policeman in yellow leading three people behind him, walking from the north to the south. The first man was dressed in golden - purple robes, the second was dressed in purple, and the third was dressed in black. They all came to the front door of the Liu family, and were forced into the house. The two men at the back complained to the man in front, "Yen Tung, if you had listened to us we wouldn't have ended up here."

Official Chen felt suspicious. The next day he heard that in the Liu family, three puppies had just been born. Then Official Chen went and told Liu of this matter. When the puppies were grown, whenever people called out the name "Yen Tung" one of them would come running.

\* \* \*



A PIG TRANSFORMS INTO A PERSON  
AND THE BUTCHER CHANGES HIS BUSINESS

-from *THE RECORDS OF TASTING  
SPRINGS*

In the village of Syin An, there was a butcher, Chang, who killed many pigs. One day he went to the pigsty to nab a pig. Amongst the pigs, one assumed the face of a person who looked just like Chang's father. Chang immediately called his wife to come and take a look, and lo-and-behold-- it was certainly their father! Everyone was grieved and wept bitterly. In a short time, the pig resumed its pig shape and died. Chang bought a coffin and buried the pig. He then gave up his butcher shop and never touched pork again.

\* \* \*

A GOOD SON IS REBORN

-from *THE RECORDS OF  
TASTING SPRINGS*

Chen Tsui lost his father when he was young. His family was poor, but he loved to study and do good deeds. His wife gave birth to a son, and they named him Shan Tsai (Good Talent). The son was extremely clever, but he died of the measles when he was only seven. Chen was grief-stricken. He used black ink and made a marking on the left thigh of the dead boy's body, and made a wish,

"May you be reborn again soon!" Henceforth, every night he thought of his son, often to the point of tears.

One night he dreamt of Shan Tsai coming to him in a dream. The boy said, "A date has been arranged for my rebirth. Father, grieve no longer!" On the fifteenth of the first month, several years later, the son appeared in a dream again and said, "Your son will come again."

That night his wife gave birth to a baby. He was named Chun Tang. A black marking was discovered on the infant's left rump. Henceforth, Chen often said, "We scholars often claim that we do not believe in reincarnation. Before, we used to say that the various records of transmigration were false and groundless. But now I know for a fact that cause and effect and transmigration is absolutely true and not off by a hair."

\* \* \*

#### OFFICER OF THE UNDERWORLD PREDICTS DEATH BY WATER AND FIRE

Mr. Lee Pe Neng relates: "In Hong Kong, there was a civil servant working for the British Government. He was called Mai and his character was incorruptible and upright. His work was extremely detailed and cautious. Every month Mai had to fall asleep for a full seven days and nights, during which time he served as court clerk for the underworld. His job was to preside over the wheel of rebirths.



Most people found this hard to believe. They would ask him, "How many souls get processed within seven days and nights?"

Mai would answer, "Several hundreds of thousands."

People asked, "Can there be that many people being reborn and dying within this short period of time?"

Mai replied, "Although there is such a thing as reincarnation, not everyone gets to be reborn as humans. For example, countless pigeons are slaughtered everyday for food. Within these twenty or thirty days, all these pigeons undergo an endless cycle of birth and death--they are born and they die; they die and are reborn, over and over again in an unending cycle. From my post I see their ceaseless turning in the wheel of transmigration."

Moreover, Mai said, "Among my colleagues in the government, there are two who are right now courting disasters, one because of his unfiliality, another because he is cheating on the law. They will die in water and in fire."

Then he cautioned those two men not to go into town. But his two colleagues would not listen to his advice, and deliberately made a trip into town. Right on that day, a huge fire broke out at the Western Gate of the City, and a flood swept over the capital. And so the two died of water and fire respectively.

Mai also said that the officers in the underworld laid special stress on the principles of Buddhism.

TSAO AVERTS DISASTER AND ENJOYS A LENGTHENED LIFE  
BECAUSE HE CHERISHED THE LIVING

-from *JOY IN LIVING*

Tsao Shun Tsung of Fu Chien Province was a live-in tutor for the Cheng family. During his residency there, he refused to eat chicken, shrimps, crabs, or any meat, fearing lest his host would have live creatures killed on his behalf. In the 1650's, he contracted an illness and lay stone cold on his bed for three days and nights, as if dead. After the three nights, he revived and told his family, "Originally, my life should have ended years ago. It was fated that I had to undergo starvation and be killed by roving bandits. However, because I had cherished the living when I was a tutor at the Cheng family, my lifespan was increased by twelve years, and I also avoided death through a fatal accident. Moreover, a few summers ago, I exhorted someone to make donations toward engraving the VAJRA SUTRA, and as a result of that act of merit, my lifespan has been further increased by another three years."

From this story, one can see that cherishing the living can serve to increase one's lifespan and eradicate impending disasters. Therefore, should one be looking for a way to obtain blessings and avoid disasters, one should abstain from killing and should liberate living creatures.

\* \* \*

SAVED FROM A PLAGUE BECAUSE THEY LIBERATED  
LIVING CREATURES

-from *JOY IN LIVING*

Most of the residents around Lake Tai Hu were fishermen. But Shen Wen Pao's family was just the opposite; they all liked to liberate the living. People laughed at them and called them fools, but Shen was a happy man. One year, an epidemic swept the entire area. Some local residents had this dream: a ghost was wielding many flags, and he made this command, "Flags should be planted in front of all the houses with the exception of the Shen Family's house." In only a few days, the great majority of the three hundred families in that village died of the plague. But the Shen family remained untouched from beginning to end.

\* \* \*

A PIG COMES TO COURT TO  
ASK FOR A LEASE ON LIFE

Mr. Shen Chao Lien records: In Hang Yang Province, during the Chien Lung reign period (1736-1796), a county magistrate presided over the civil cases there. One day as he was holding court, what do you suppose came in? A pig! The pig knelt on the steps before the judge's bench. The judge thought it strange, and asked the pig, "Is there a grudge you want to settle?" The pig shook its head. Then the judge asked, "Is it because

you don't have enough food?" Again the pig shook its head. Then the judge asked, "Is it because you are afraid to die?" The pig nodded its head and started to weep. The court people looked into it and found that the pig had escaped from a butcher shop outside the city. They bought the pig and set it free in a "liberating the living ceremony" at the temple.

\* \* \*

## RESCUING THE LIVING

We wish that those who are liberating the living will increase their understanding, their Bodhi conduct and Bodhi vows in thought after thought. In rescuing and protecting living beings they should always think of living beings as themselves, so all may obtain life, peace, and nourishment; so that they may see Amita Buddha, and certify to the patience in which dharmas do not arise.





Pure water is sprinkled from the tip of the willow branch, as hundreds of wild fowl ransomed from captivity receive the Three Refuges and are about to be set free. Assembly recites the Buddha's name and the Great Compassion Mantra around them.

## REPENTANCE AND REFORM

For all bad karma created  
    in the past,  
Based on beginningless  
    greed, hatred, and stupidity,  
And born of body, mouth, and mind,  
I now repent and reform.

Offenses arise from the mind:  
    repentance is done in the mind.  
When thoughts are no more,  
    offenses are forgotten.  
With mind forgotten, offenses  
    wiped out--both are empty.  
This is called true repentance  
    and reform.



Large-scale "liberating the living" ceremonies are held every month at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, in an attempt to mitigate mankind's collective killing karma and to avert warfare and disasters that threaten our planet.

"The unpardonable sin of man  
is cruelty and neglect to our  
fellow creatures."

-Morton Alexander

\* \* \*

-Be kind to animals by not eating them-

\* \* \*

Take not away the life you cannot  
give,  
For all things have an equal  
right to live.



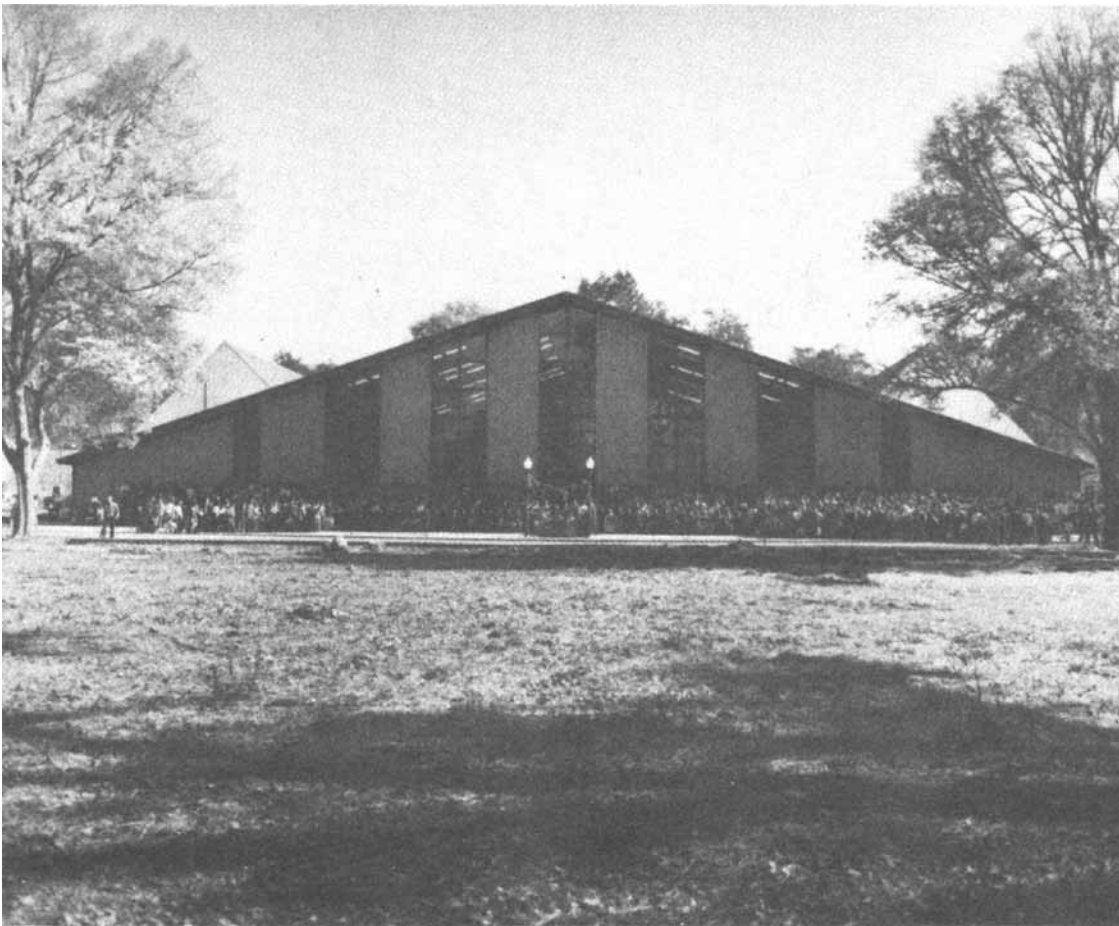
BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY, May, 1982: over 600 friends from near and far gathered together for a liberating the living ceremony in which hundreds of wild and domestic fowl were set free.

"No physiologist would dispute that man ought to live on a vegetarian diet."

-Dr. Spencer Thomson

"The natural food of man, judging from his structure, consists of fruits, roots, and vegetables."

-Baron Cuvier



OPENING CEREMONIES AT THE  
SAGELY CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS

October 31, 1982

Over 2000 guests shared a meal at the newly finished  
FIVE CONTEMPLATIONS VEGETARIAN DINING HALL

## THE FOUR GREAT BODHISATTVA VOWS

Living beings are boundless,  
I vow to save them all.  
Afflictions are endless,  
I vow to cut them off.  
Dharma-doors are countless,  
I vow to learn them all.  
The Buddha Way is unsurpassed,  
I vow to attain it.





Hundreds of pigeons are set free during one of the monthly "liberating the living" ceremonies held on the grounds of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

## SHAME

People are not sages or worthies,  
We can't help but make mistakes.  
But if we can correct our faults,  
Then this is the greatest good  
of all.

Cultivate repentance,  
Make up for wrongs we have done.  
Resolve never to harm or kill  
again,  
And vow to be a new person.



AT INSTILLING VIRTUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
AND CULTIVATING VIRTUE HIGH SCHOOL  
students are taught the principle of filial  
piety, "All living creatures have been my parents  
in past lives. By not eating their meat I am  
being filial to all living beings and not contri-  
buting to more hate, resentment and world wars."

## VERSE OF DEDICATION

May those born from wombs, from eggs,  
    from moisture, or by transformation,  
Who for aeons have sunk in confusion,  
Bring forth the Bodhi resolve,  
Take refuge with the Triple Jewel,  
And avoid capture in cages or nets.  
May they be free on land, in the seas,  
    or in the sky,  
And follow the Buddha to be reborn  
    in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.



About 500 acres of rolling hills and fertile meadows of the Sagely City provide ample room to allow many kinds of beings to live together in peace. The blissful harmony gives our children healthy bodies and a strong spiritual upbringing.

## NATURAL FEELINGS

When I see those who are alive,  
I do not wish to see them die;  
When I hear their sounds,  
I cannot bear to eat their flesh.

- Mencius -



*Dharma Protector Wei To Bodhisattva*

*Verse of Transference*

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,  
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,  
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,  
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.

May those who see and hear of this,  
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi,  
And when this retribution body is over,  
Be born together in ultimate bliss.





# Cherishing Life

~Volume Two~

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Namo Shakyamuni Buddha

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- A translator must not establish himself or herself as the standard of correctness and suppress the work of others with his or her faultfinding.*
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- A translator must request the Elder Virtuous Ones of the ten directions to certify his or her translations.*
- A translator must endeavor to propagate the teachings by printing sutras, shastra texts, and vinaya texts when the translations are certified as being correct.*



VENERABLE TRIPITAKA MASTER HSUAN HUA

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Cherishing  
Life

~Volume Two~





## THE FALLACY OF MEAT-EATING

Some people say we must eat meat in order to stay alive and that if one doesn't eat meat one will simply not get enough nutrition. This is a very erroneous point of view.

Originally, humans came from the Light-Sound Heaven. When they arrived on our earth, they nourished themselves with something called "the flavor of the earth". This food was very fragrant and tasty, but when the gods from the Light-Sound Heaven started to eat it, they got greedy and wanted to eat more and more. They only needed to eat a little and it would have been enough to fill them. In fact, they needed only to look at it and they could have gotten their fill. But because of their greed, they ate more than they needed.

When these gods overate, their appearance began to change--they became very ugly. Because they got ugly, they began to feel jealous of others. They got jealous of those who were more beautiful than they. Those who did not eat a lot had a pleasant appearance. But those who were good-looking got arrogant and said, "Look at you; how ugly you are!" And that's the problem with those who are good-looking--they get arrogant.

So along with the jealousy and arrogance came greed, hatred, and stupidity. When those three poisons accumulated enough, the "flavor of the earth" entirely vanished from the face of the earth. After that, there was no more "flavor of the earth" to partake of.

Then another type of food appeared. It was called the "fat of the land". Although the "fat of the land" wasn't as good-tasting as the "flavor of the earth," it was still quite delicious, and so there were many who were very fond of it. Since there was a lot of it around, people got greedy again, and again their appearances changed and they got even uglier. Those who didn't eat too much still had handsome features.

As a result, the same problems arose. The fat ones got jealous, and this time it was even worse than before. Those who were arrogant got even more so than before. They either grew sour or got extremely conceited.

When the fat of the land disappeared, something else grew in the fields, which was called "wild rice". It grew naturally, without cultivation. It didn't need to be planted or threshed or hulled. People could just go out and pick it. This rice was still quite delicious. But as time went by, people began to go out to the fields and gather the grain to store in their barns. Because they had greedy minds, they wanted to keep the grain for themselves so that others could not get any of it to eat. And then the wild rice disappeared.

After that, people had to labor and toil in the fields to grow their food. So they planted the five grains. This is the way that people obtain their food even to this day.

In ancient times, people did not have to eat meat in order to live, and their lifespans were

very long. Some people lived for ten thousand years. Some lived for a few hundred years. 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 everyone can stop eating meat, then the human lifespan will increase and slowly, slowly it can climb up to 84,000 years!



Mahakashyapa asked the Buddha,  
"Why is it that the Thus  
Come One does not allow eating  
meat?"

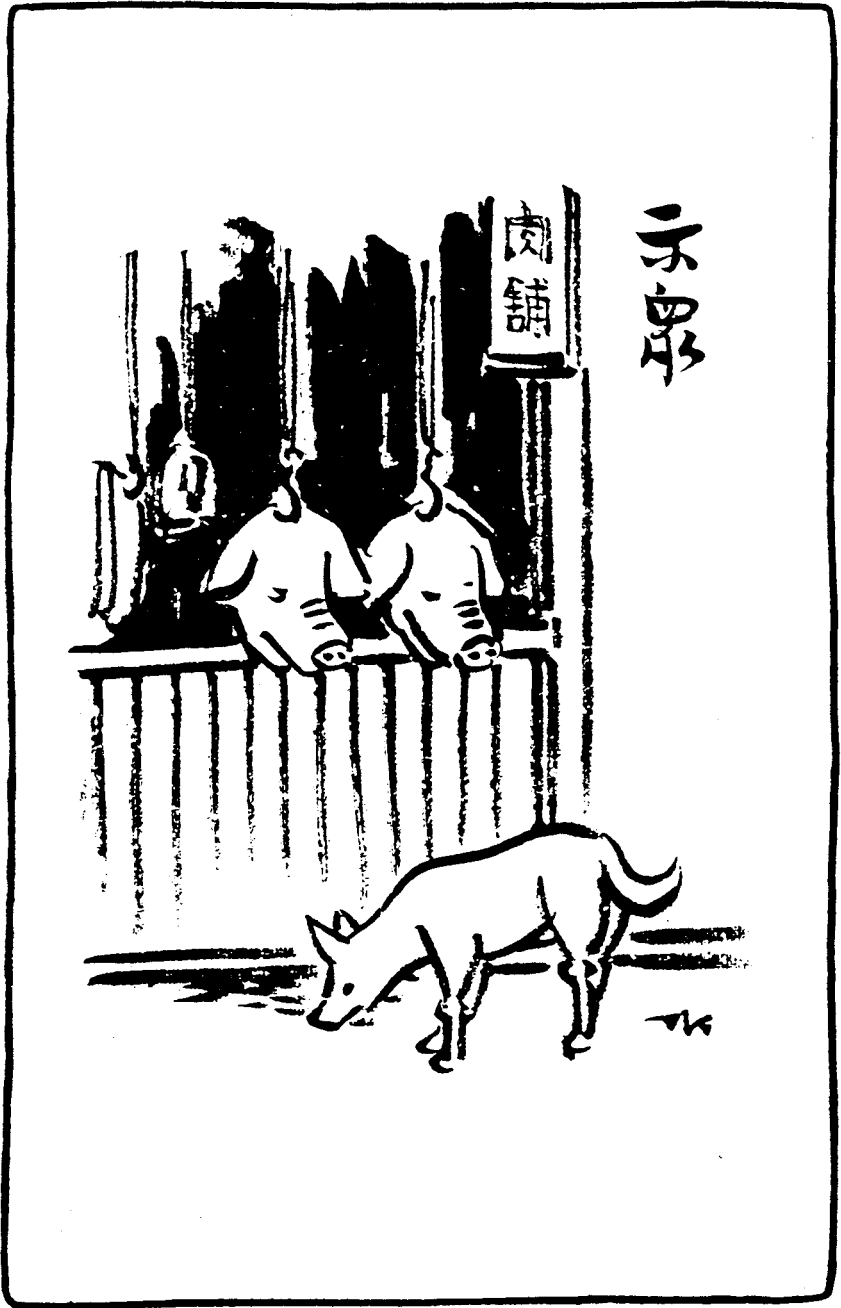
The Buddha replied,  
"It is because meat-eating  
cuts off the seeds of Great  
Compassion."





## MEAT BROTH

For hundreds of thousands of years  
and ages,  
There's been meat in the pot  
simmering in a stew,  
Brewing up hatred, resentment and rage  
that will be hard to ever make level.  
If you want to know the reason why this  
world is full of wars and fights,  
Just listen one time to the cries that  
come from the slaughterhouse  
at midnight.



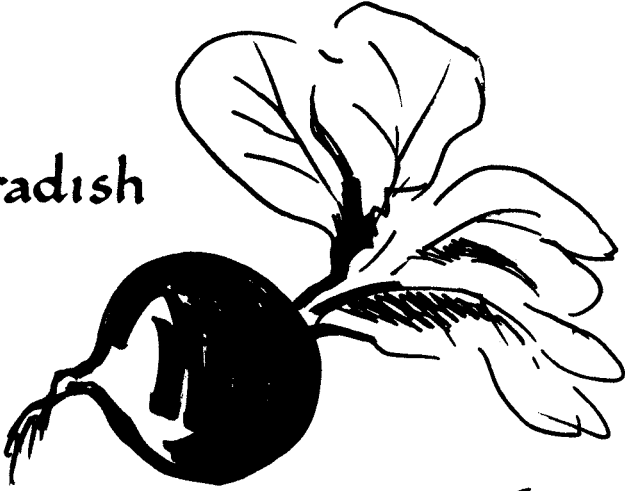


## SOLUTION

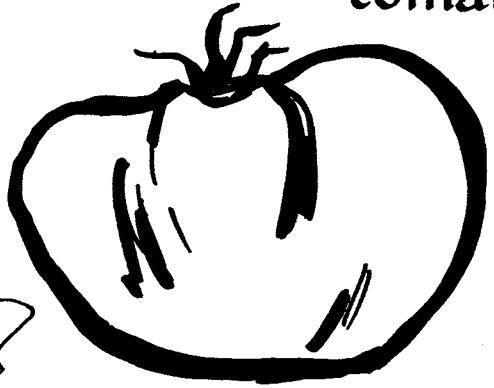
Waves of war, madness and blood,  
Sweep over us like a big flood,  
This wound, so harsh and deep,  
Is enough to make you and me weep.

By learning to not kill and  
    fight,  
We can save mankind from a  
    terrible plight,  
The number one very best deed,  
Is just to stop eating meat.

radish



tomato

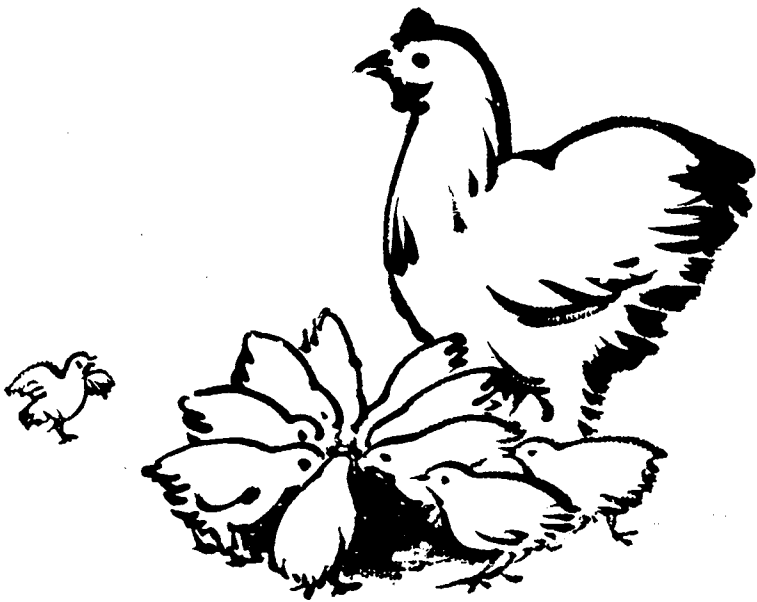


beet

## DIET FOR SMART PEOPLE

Smart people eat pure vegetables,  
Stupid ones find meat delectable.  
If you don't want to end up  
    dumb and daffy,  
Go easy on the hamburger patties.

推食



## MATERNAL LOVE

Even animals love their young:  
The dog licks her litter, the cow licks  
her calf,  
The hen protects her brood, all together  
under her wing,  
While mother eel curls up her own body  
and lovingly guards her babies.

But people, greedy for mouth blessings,  
Feed on others' offspring.  
Animals feel pain as much as we  
human beings.  
They have tears, too; perhaps you  
haven't seen them..

遇救



## PROTECTING THE LIVING

Cause and effect is not off by a hair.  
If we know, there's no need to despair.  
Plant good seeds, and get good results;  
Plant bad seeds, and you'll pay back,  
of course.

In liberating the living,  
You yourself will live long.  
Health, riches, and blessings  
Will descend upon you, never-ending.

If you deprive others of life,  
Then your own family will have strife.  
Illness, death, and sorrow  
Will be the fruits of tomorrow.

So, wise ones fear cause and effect,  
And at all times try their very best.  
After they understand these truths,  
They will help others awaken, too.

幸福的  
因情



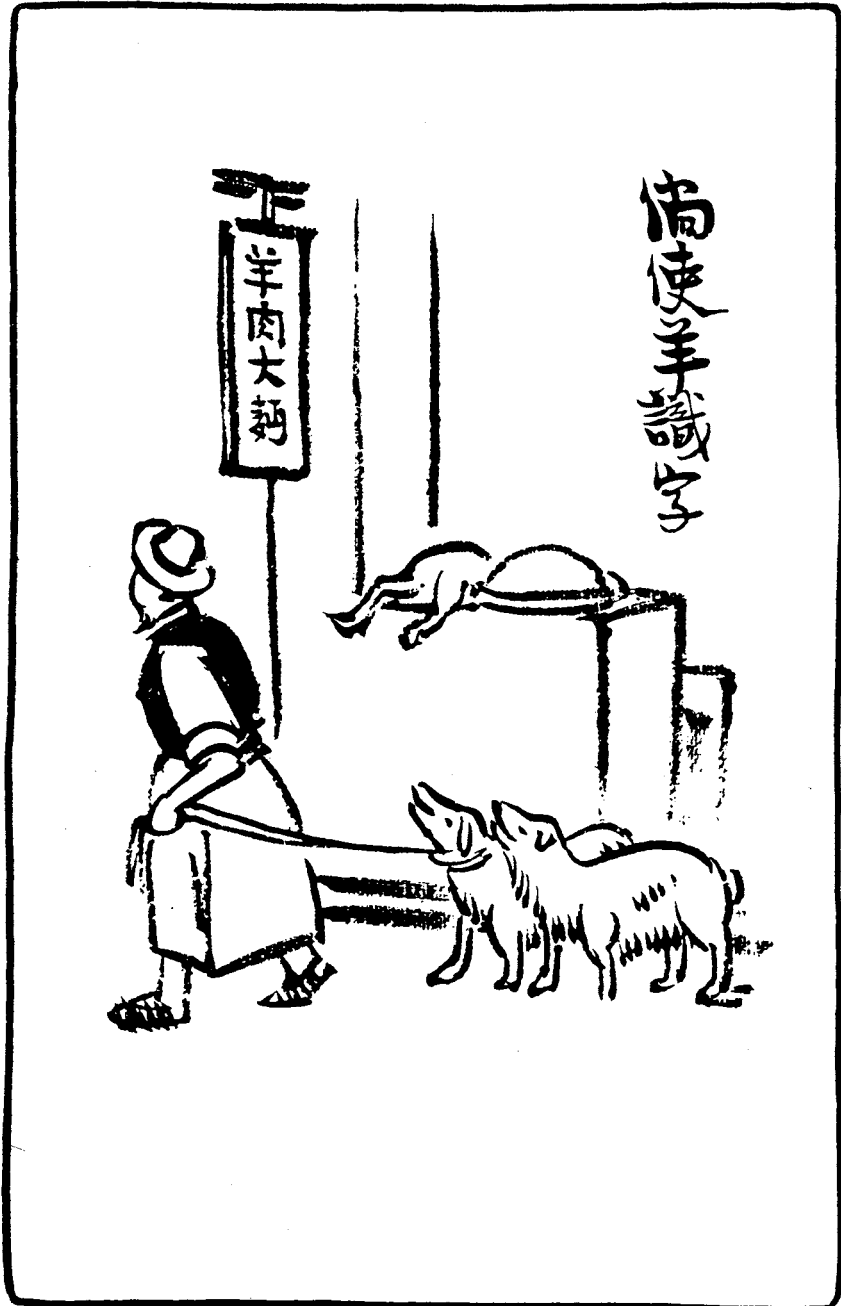


## CHANGE

From beginningless time until  
today,  
I've hurt others in many ways.  
Because of cruel thoughts in  
my mind,  
I've become so confused and  
blind.

So I now sincerely repent  
Of the energy and time ill  
spent;  
New truths help me understand  
That there's still time to  
make amends.

All the creatures I have  
alarmed  
I vow never again to harm.  
Living beings I will no longer  
bother,  
As I learn the ways of a  
Bodhisattva!



ON PASSING BY A RESTAURANT  
WITH A BIG SIGN THAT SAYS,  
"DELICIOUS MUTTON NOODLES":

---

If only sheep could read,  
How piteously would they plead,  
But because you want to eat  
    their meat,  
You ignore their woeful bleat.

And so they shed their tears,  
And quietly swallow their  
    fears;  
How hard they suffer in sorrow,  
Awaiting the slaughterhouse  
    tomorrow!

餘糧及鷄犬



## ONE SUBSTANCE

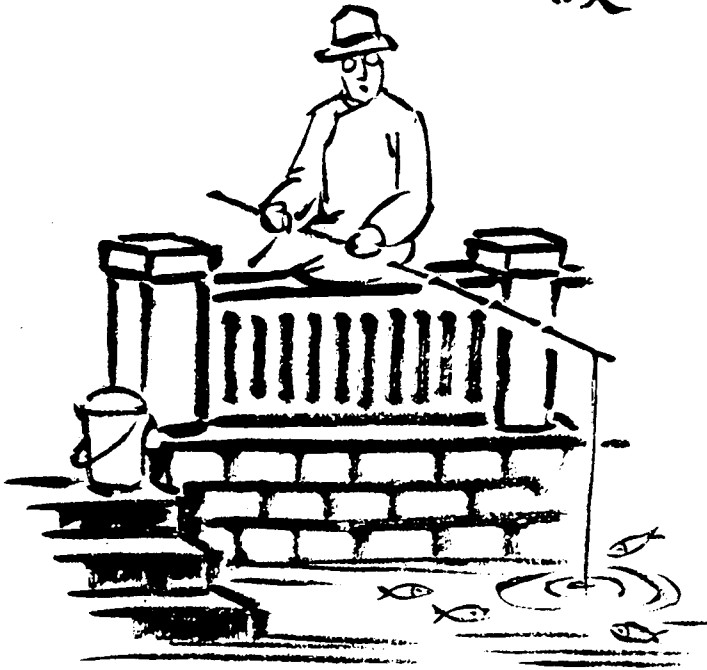
All men, birds, and beasts,  
In the beginning are much the same,  
Although we have different names,  
Each has his own share of joy and pain.

Now why would man steel his heart  
And tear other creatures apart,  
And for the sake of profit and gain,  
Do things utterly inhumane?

If this message hits home,  
Then think it over when you're alone.  
If you want to learn to be kind,  
Start by changing the thoughts in  
your mind.

As we sow, so shall we reap,  
So don't try to get off cheap,  
Learn the laws of cause and effect,  
And human virtue you will perfect.

誘叔



## PREYING

This man prepares bait and  
tackle,  
It looks so very simple,  
But the lives of others are  
at stake,  
And in the future, there'll be  
bones to pick.

Mackeral, herring, or snapper  
Make a very fine supper;  
But to prey on the lives of  
others--  
Doesn't that give your  
conscience trouble?

Therefore, I urge you to  
think twice:  
Better clean up our own lives,  
If we don't set up bad ties,  
In the future, there'll be no  
no need to cry.





## JEALOUSY

Jealousy's blaze rages,  
Consuming precious Bodhi  
sprouts,  
Leaving our minds barren and  
dark.

Let us revive those precious  
seeds  
With the sweet dew of true  
compassion!



松林洞壑  
呼頓鳴波小卷筆意  
[Red Seal]

## CAUSE AND EFFECT

The power of karma is extremely great and can rival Mount Sumeru. It can deepen the great ocean and obstruct the Sagely Way. For this reason, living beings should not look lightly upon slight evils, considering them not to be offenses, for after death, retribution is undergone in the most exact detail.

-EARTH STORE SUTRA,  
"The Names of the Hells"  
Chapter 5

雞獲狗子



## REPAYMENT IN KIND

If he meets those who take life, Earth Store Bodhisattva speaks of the retribution of a short lifespan.

If he meets those who violate precepts and the regulations of pure eating, he speaks of the retribution of being born as birds and beasts suffering from hunger and thirst.

-EARTH STORE SUTRA

"Karmic Retributions  
of the Living Beings  
of Jambudvipa,"

Chapter 4

街  
泥  
帶  
得  
落  
在  
歸



DE-ACTIVATE THE  
ATOM BOMB IN OUR MINDS

We rage and tear at one another,  
Bombs and lasers lodged in  
our every hairpore.  
But now the sweet rain of  
Dharma soothes us  
And de-activates the bombs  
within our hearts.  
Let's erase stupidity and hate,  
And bring forth wisdom to  
benefit all beings.

依巨壑寒林圖

維  
亦  
印





## AWAKENING

I know that my past faults were  
left uncorrected,  
Yet I am aware that in the  
future I can mend my ways.  
I've not been off the path of  
confusion for very long,  
As I awaken to today's rights  
and yesterday's wrongs.

-Chin Poet, T'ao Yuan Ming,  
"THE ODE OF RETURN"



## RETRIBUTION

If he meets those who enjoy hunting, he speaks of a frightening insanity and disastrous fate. If he meets those who rebel against their parents, he speaks of the retribution of being killed in natural disasters. If he meets those who set fires to mountains or forests, he speaks of the retribution of seeking to commit suicide in the confusion of insanity. If he meets those who scald, burn, behead, chop up, or otherwise harm living beings he speaks of the retribution of the same.

-EARTH STORE SUTRA

"Karmic Retribution of  
the Three Periods  
of Time,"

Chapter 4

遇救



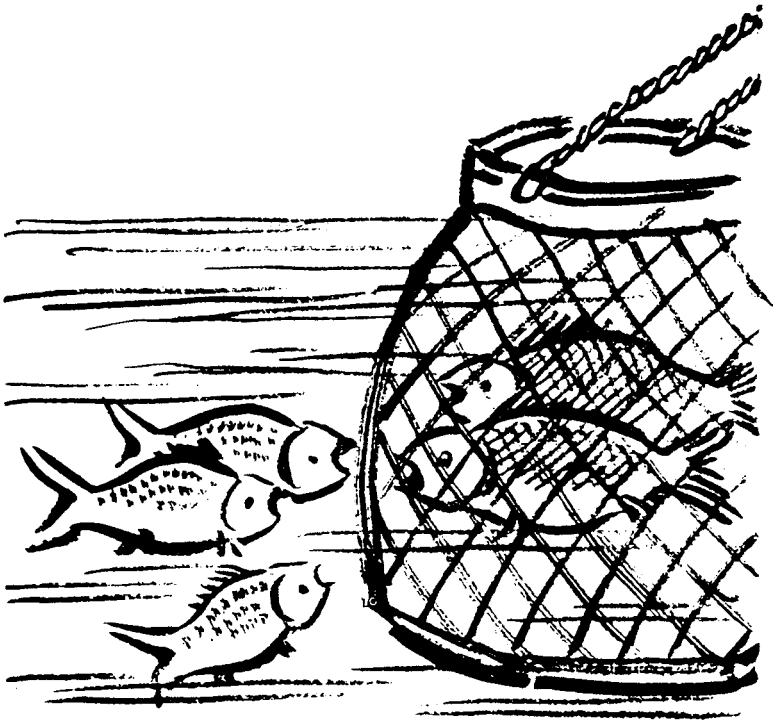
## THE FIRST RULE: NO KILLING

The First Major Precept prohibits killing. A disciple of the Buddha must not kill by himself, encourage others to kill, kill with expedient means, praise killing, or react with delight upon witnessing killing. He must not employ any method whatever, not even mantras, to kill any living being. Further, a Bodhisattva must not involve himself in the causes, conditions, methods, or karma of killing, to the extent that he cannot deliberately kill any living creature. A Bodhisattva should always give rise to an eternally abiding mind of kindness, compassion, and filial compliance. Thus, he should devise skillful means to rescue and protect all beings. Hence, if a Bodhisattva kills with indulgence or evinces delight in killing any being, he thereby commits a Bodhisattva Parajika Offense.

-BRAHMA NET SUTRA

First Major Bodhisattva Precept

探牢



"While we ourselves are the living graves of murdered animals, how can we expect any ideal conditions on this earth?"

-Leo Tolstoy

"Truly, man is the king of beasts, for his brutality exceeds theirs. We live by the death of others. We are burial places. I have from an early age looked upon the killing of animals as we now look upon the murder of men."

-Leonardo da Vinci

無聲的感謝





## VIOLATING OUR TRUST

Killing instills fear and  
    resentment in the heart.  
It poisons our very systems.  
The more we abuse and harm  
    others,  
The more we feel anxious and  
    depressed ourselves.  
All troubles of the world  
    spring from this:  
Doing things that violate our  
    truest natures.

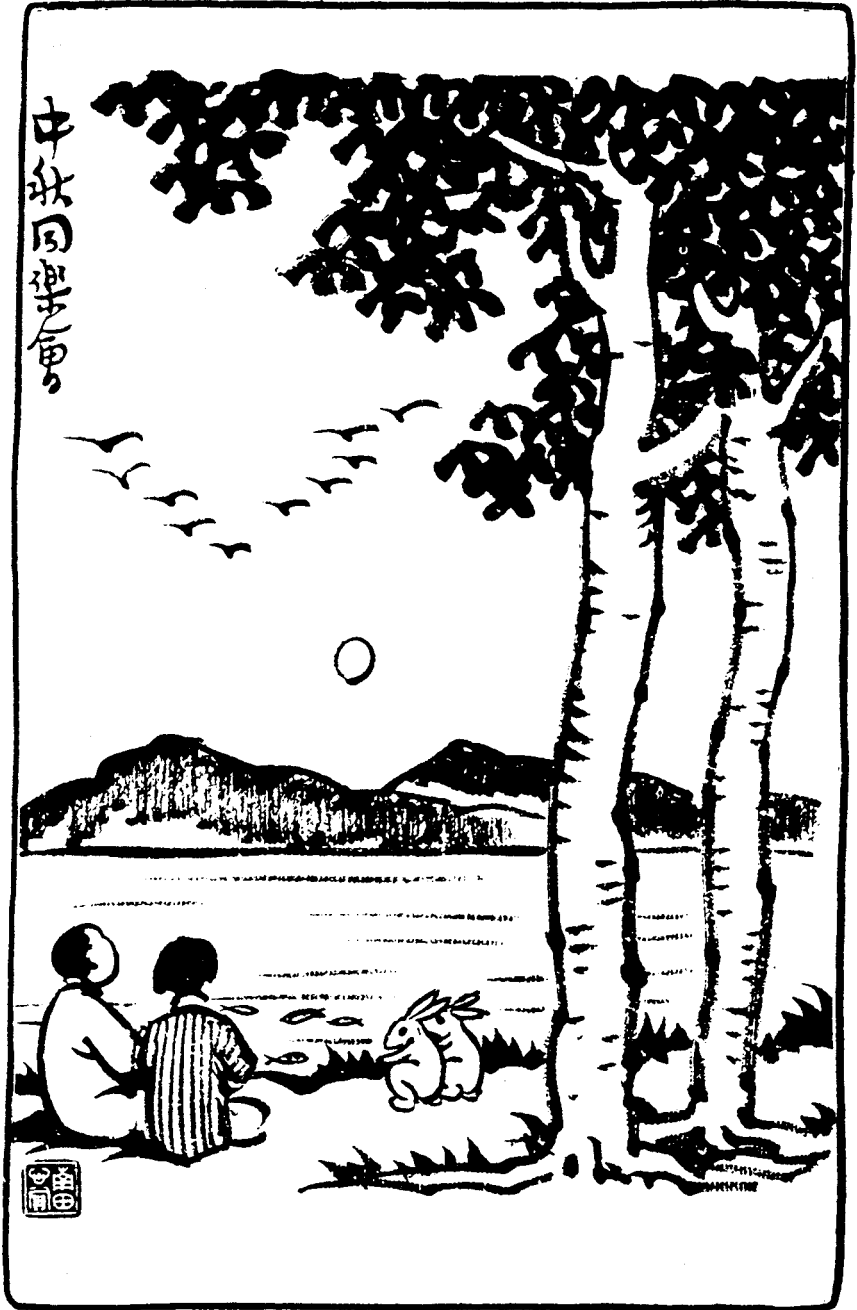
桓山之鳥



"Animals are living creatures with feelings and desires similar to our own, differing only in degree, whose RIGHTS must be conceded."

-E. Thompson Seton

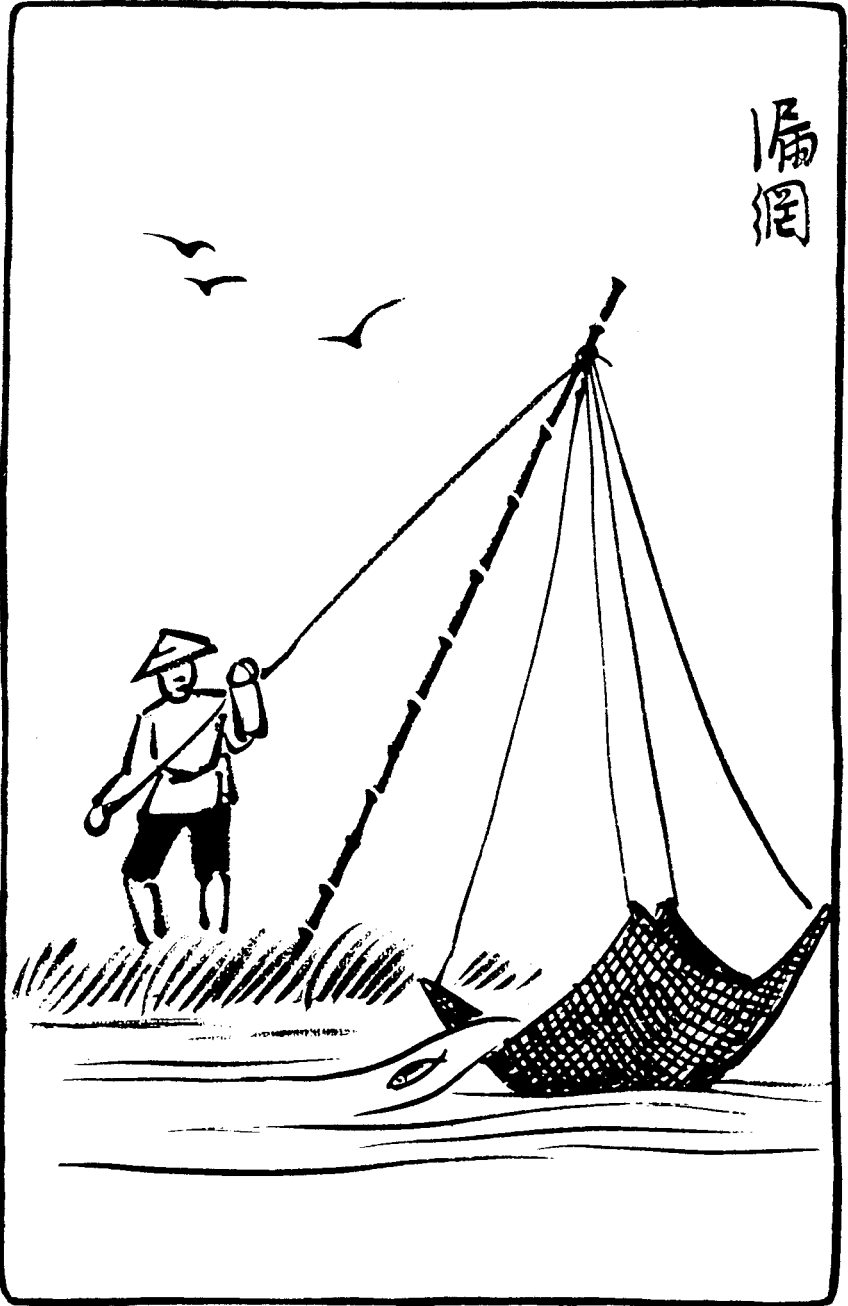
Unless our desire for peace is to be branded as selfishness, and our teaching of sympathy and brotherly love as hypocrisy, we need to reconsider very closely our attitude toward the taking of life.



## NATURAL LAW

Heaven has an innate fondness  
for all that lives,  
It cherishes you, me, and all  
other beings.  
To seize the lives of others  
Is to oppose this natural law.  
Such actions only backfire,  
And bring on disasters,  
illnesses, and unending wars.

漏網



"Your humaneness, your morality,  
your civilization, your culture all  
begin at the dinner table."

-anonymous

"Can unjustly, immorally obtained  
food gained by robbing others of their  
lives produce a moral race?"

-anonymous



綢繆牖戶



## FORGIVENESS

A Bodhisattva is imbued with shame and  
remorse,  
Full of reciprocity and forgiveness.  
He knows that harming other beings  
Is the same as harming his own nature.  
Day and night, he only thinks of how  
to benefit one and all.

關之雕鳩男女有別



ONE SPARK OF ANGER

A tiny spark of anger

can

Burn up a whole forest of  
merit and virtue.

---

"The only consistent  
humanitarian is the one who  
is not a flesh-eater."

-Ralph Waldo Trine



## UNDER HEAVEN

Under Heaven, all creatures  
are made equal.  
All have the potential to  
become Buddhas.  
They are born into the world  
to live out their years.  
We have no business depriving  
them of their birthrights.

蚂蚁搬家



## PROTECTION

From the break of day until  
the dusk,  
All you creatures had best  
take care of yourselves.  
If you should come to harm  
beneath my feet,  
I vow that you'll be quickly  
born in the Pure Land.

- VINAYA





## BROTHERS

They were cooking beans over  
a beanstalk fire;  
The beans wept and complained  
in the pot:  
"Oh, why, since we grew from  
the selfsame roots,  
Should you kill me with  
anger hot?"

During the Three Kingdoms Period, General Ts'ao Ts'ao (155-220) founded the Wei Dynasty. Ts'ao Pi, his older son, was jealous of his younger brother, Ts'ao Chih, a distinguished poet. Once, Ts'ao Pi determined to execute his brother unless he could compose a poem within the time required to take seven steps. This is the poem Ts'ao Chih made up on-the-spot. Ts'ao Pi was so ashamed and impressed by his brother's literary genius that he changed his mind and didn't have him killed after all.

呦呦鹿鳴  
食相呼



## TO LIBERATE BEINGS

A disciple of the Buddha must maintain a mind of kindness and cultivate the practice of liberating beings. He should reflect thus: all male beings have been my father and all female beings have been my mother. There is not a single being who has not given birth to me during my previous lives. Hence, all beings of the six destinies are my parents. Therefore, when a person kills and eats any of those beings, he thereby slaughters my parents. Furthermore, he kills a body that was once my own...

...Whenever a Bodhisattva sees a person preparing to kill an animal, he should devise a skillful method to rescue and protect it, freeing it from its suffering and difficulties...

-BRAHMA NET SUTRA

Twentieth Minor Precept

初生的小鹿



## ON COLLECTING DEADLY WEAPONS

A disciple of the Buddha must not collect knives, clubs, bows, arrows, spears, axes, or any other weapons used in killing beings. If his own parents were murdered, a Bodhisattva still must not seek revenge, much less would he slaughter other living beings. Hence, he should not collect any weapons that can kill living beings. If he deliberately collects such weapons, he thereby violates this Minor Precept and commits a defiling offense.

-BRAHMA NET SUTRA  
Tenth Minor Precept

放生也



## REFRAIN FROM EATING MEAT

The Third Minor Precept prohibits eating meat. A disciple of the Buddha must not deliberately eat the flesh of any being, for if he does so, he thereby cuts off great compassion, kindness, and the seed of the Buddha-nature and causes all beings who encounter him to avoid him. Therefore, all Bodhisattvas must abstain from eating the flesh of any being, for meat-eating is the source of limitless offenses. Hence, if a Bodhisattva deliberately eats meat, he thereby violates this Minor Precept and commits a defiling offense.

-BRAHMA NET SUTRA

Third Minor Precept

但令四海常豐稔  
不嫌人間歲在多少



TK



AND GOD SAID, "BEHOLD, I HAVE  
GIVEN YOU EVERY HERB-BEARING SEED  
WHICH IS UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH,  
AND EVERY TREE IN WHICH ARE FRUITS;  
FOR YOU IT SHALL BE AS MEAT,"

-GENESIS, 1,29

---

"It's nice to eat a meal and not  
have to worry about what your food  
may have died of."

-Dr. J. H. Kellog



歸市

"The truly merciful person will not take part in slaughter by eating its products."

-anonymous

---

"The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of all evil."

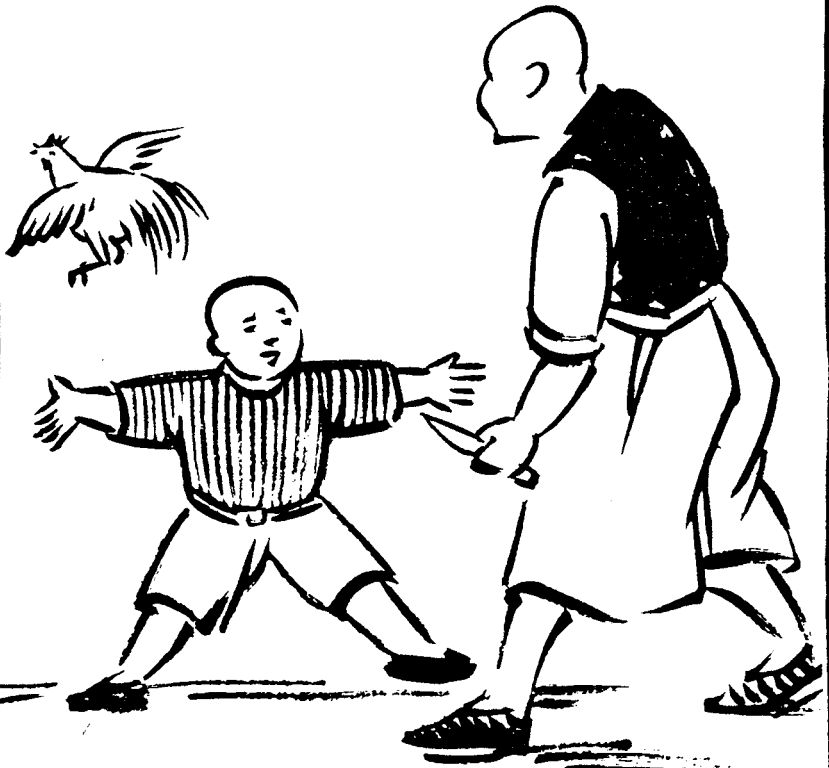
-P. B. Shelley

---

"Can the meat-eater outrage the sacred principles of life without injuring himself? -- Reap as you sow."

-anonymous

人之初  
性本善



TK

## SETTLING DEBTS

A sheep dies and becomes  
a person;

A person dies and becomes  
a sheep.

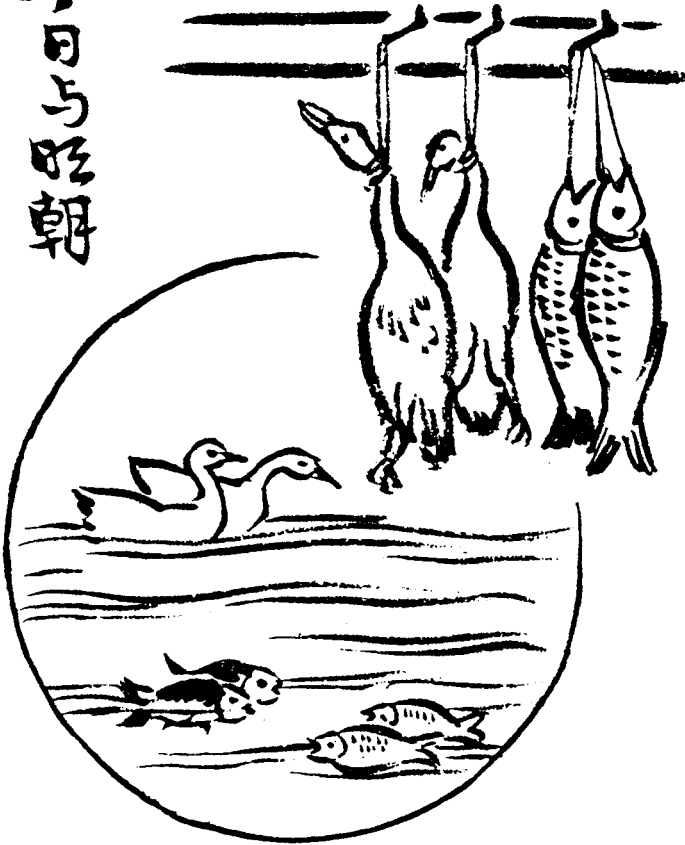
"You owe me a life from  
last time!"

"Let me settle the score  
with you!"

Mutually they devour each  
other's flesh,

Locked in an endless chain of  
combat.

今日与明朝



## MEAT CORPORATION

If you frequently eat the meat  
of certain animals,  
It's likely you'll form a  
corporation with them.  
People can become what they eat.  
If you don't want to be a  
pig or a cow next life,  
Take care not to eat their meat.

「客人忙攔阻：  
我今天吃素！」





## THE DEBT OF FILIAL KINDNESS

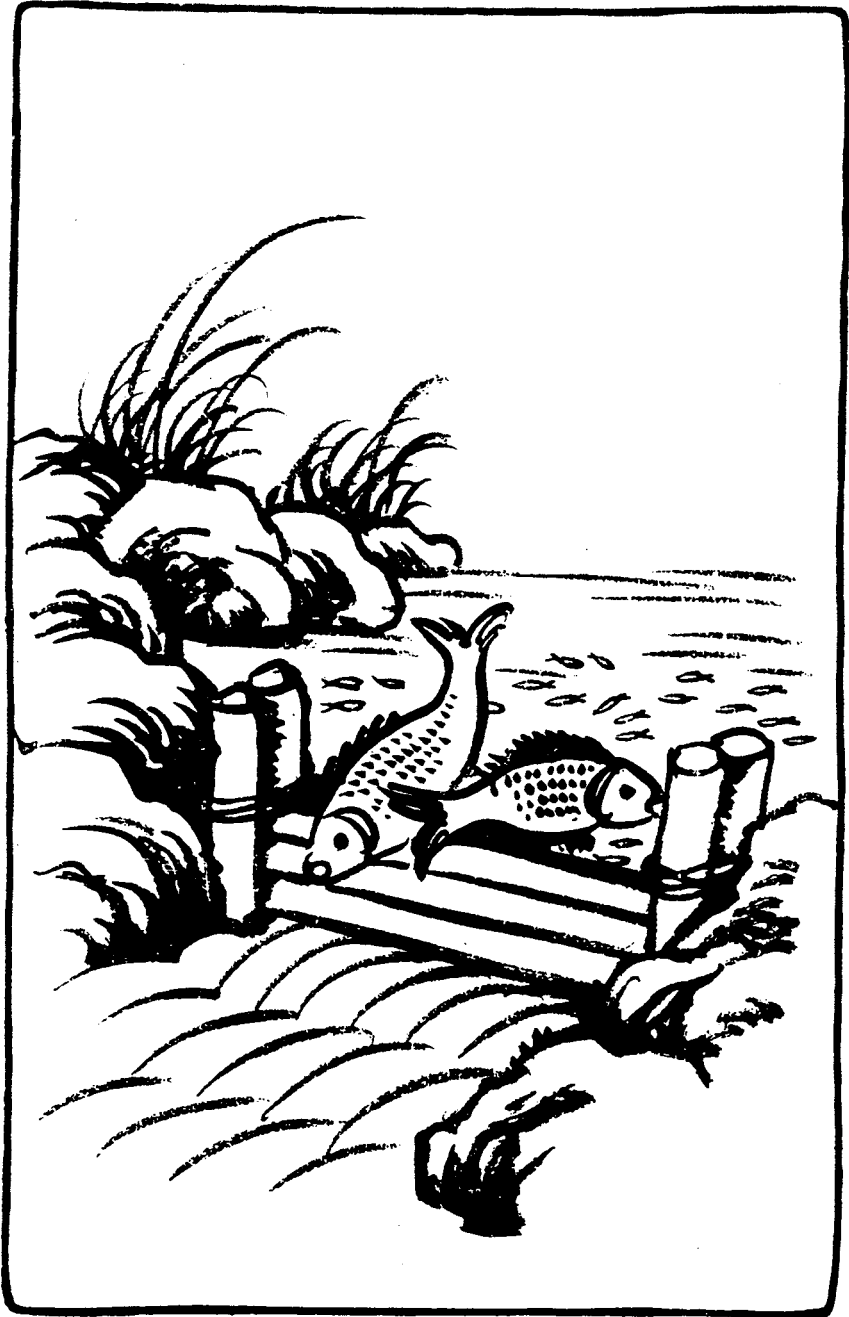
All beings have been my parents  
in the past,  
To take their lives and eat  
their flesh would be an  
act of utmost unfiliality.  
We think nothing of gorging  
ourselves on veal and  
tender young lamb,  
But how would you feel if your  
own children were butchered  
and served on a  
barbecue rack?

蝴蝶來儀



## COMPASSION

Compassion on the vastest scale  
is just  
Regarding all living beings as  
one substance with oneself,  
When others hurt, I myself hurt,  
When others are killed,  
a part of me dies,  
When others flourish,  
my heart is filled with joy!



## WHY ME!?

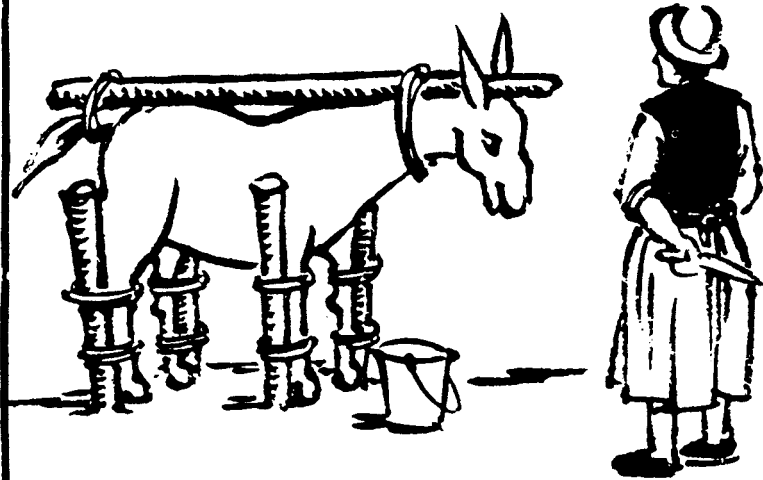
Why do some people die of  
starvation in this life?

Because in the past they  
plugged the holes of  
rats and snakes.

Why do some people die of  
poisoning in this life?

Because in the past they  
dammed the rivers and  
poisoned the fish.

酷刑



## ASK YOURSELF

Why do some people vomit blood  
in this life?

Because in the past they would  
eat meat and then  
go and recite Sutras.

Why do some people hang  
themselves in this life?

Because in the past they captured  
animals with nooses in the  
mountain forests.

-SUTRA OF CAUSE AND EFFECT  
OF THE THREE PERIODS  
OF TIME.

方長不折





## PAST AND PRESENT

If you wish to know about  
events from former lives,  
Look at what you're repaying  
in this life.

If you wish to know about  
events in future lives,  
Look at what you're doing  
right now.

綠滿窗前柳不除



## THERE'S ALWAYS A REASON

Why do some people enjoy longevity?

Because in the past they ransomed  
creatures and liberated the living.

Why do some people suffer short  
lifespans?

Because in the past they slaughtered  
living beings.

Why are some people pigs and dogs in  
this life?

Because in the past they cheated and  
injured others.

Why do some people suffer much illness  
in this life?

Because in the past they offered  
wine and meat to the Buddhas.



## BRIDGE-CROSSING

When I see a bridge-crossing,  
I vow that living beings  
Will act as a bridge for all  
    living beings  
And expansively cross them over.

-AVATAMSAKA SUTRA  
Pure Conduct Chapter

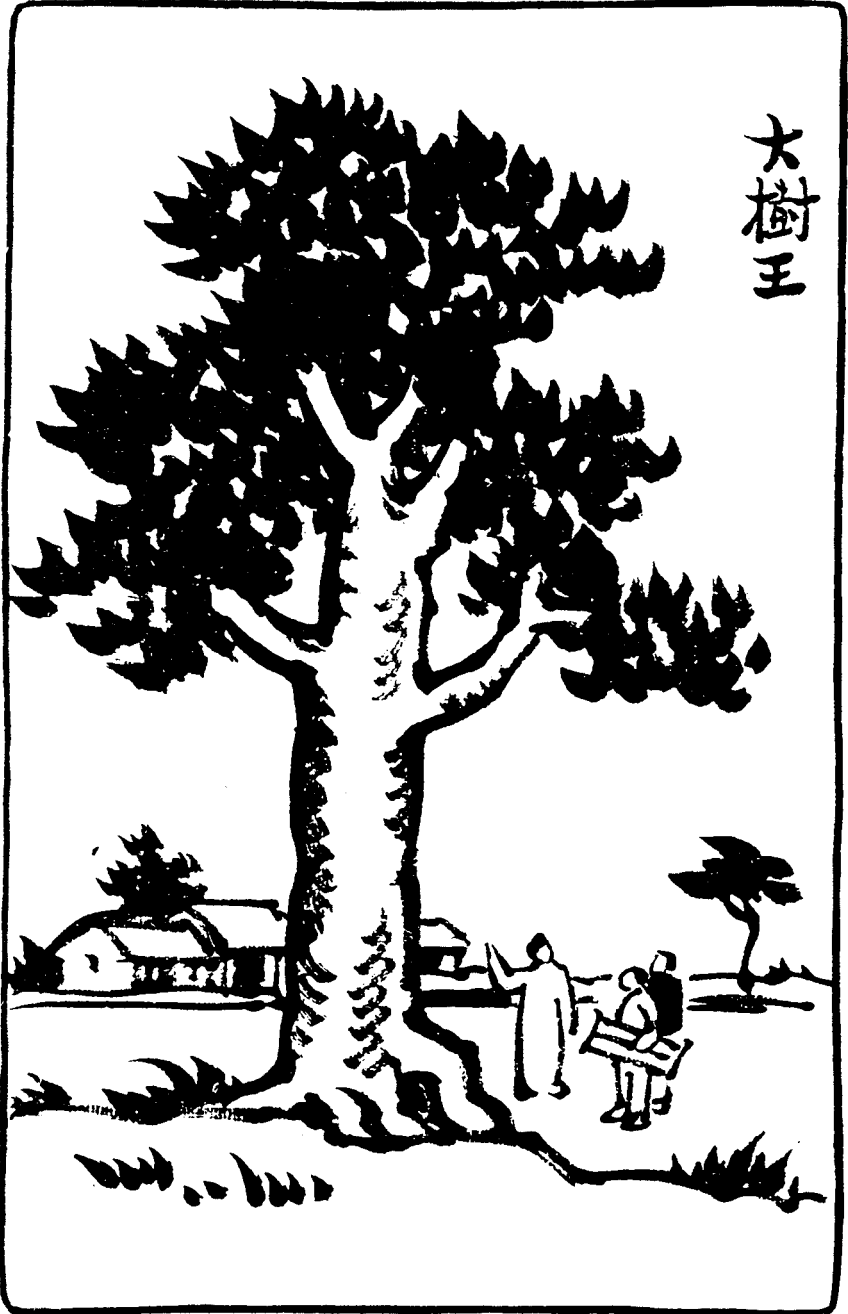
## THE TALL PINE

When I see the luxuriant foliage  
on trees,  
I vow that living beings  
Will become liberated through  
concentration,  
And act as a shelter.

-AVATAMSAKA SUTRA  
Pure Conduct Chapter



大樹王



## THE KING OF TREES

It is like a great king of trees growing in the rocks and sand of a barren wilderness. When the roots get water, the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits will all flourish. The Bodhi Tree King, growing in the wilderness of birth and death, is the same. All living beings are its roots; all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are its flowers and fruits. By benefitting all beings with the water of Great Compassion, one can realize the flowers and fruits of the wisdom of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

-AVATAMSAKA SUTRA

"Universal Worthy's

Conduct and Vows" Chapter



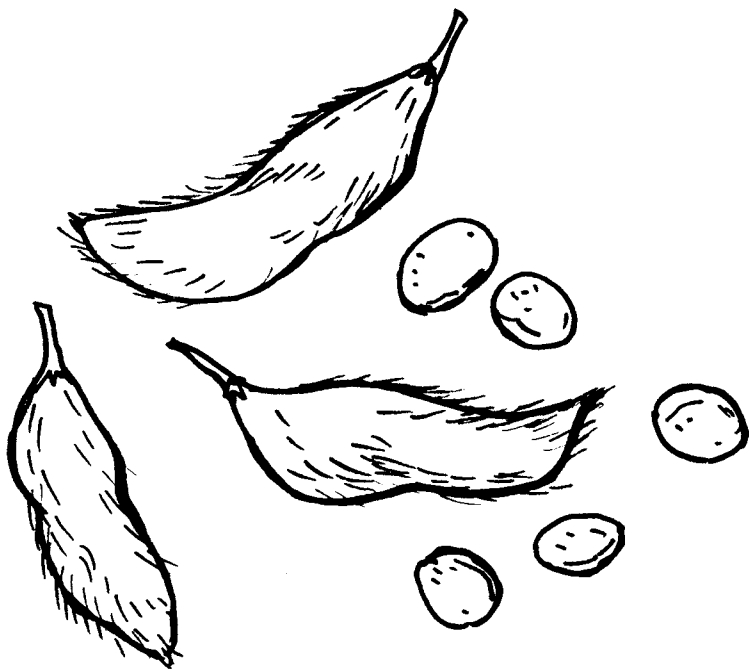
peas



MEAT: INEFFICIENT  
FOOD-ENERGY CONVERTOR

In America, 80 to 90% of our grains are used to feed livestock, leading to great waste and a worldwide food-energy loss. Fourteen to twenty-one pounds of fodder are needed to produce only one pound of protein from beef. Therefore, a cow is a protein factory in reverse. If the total protein from these crops could be directly used by people, it would make up 90% of the world's protein deficit!

-from DIET FOR A SMALL PLANET  
by Frances Moore Lappé



soybeans

## SOME FACTS ABOUT THE SOYBEAN

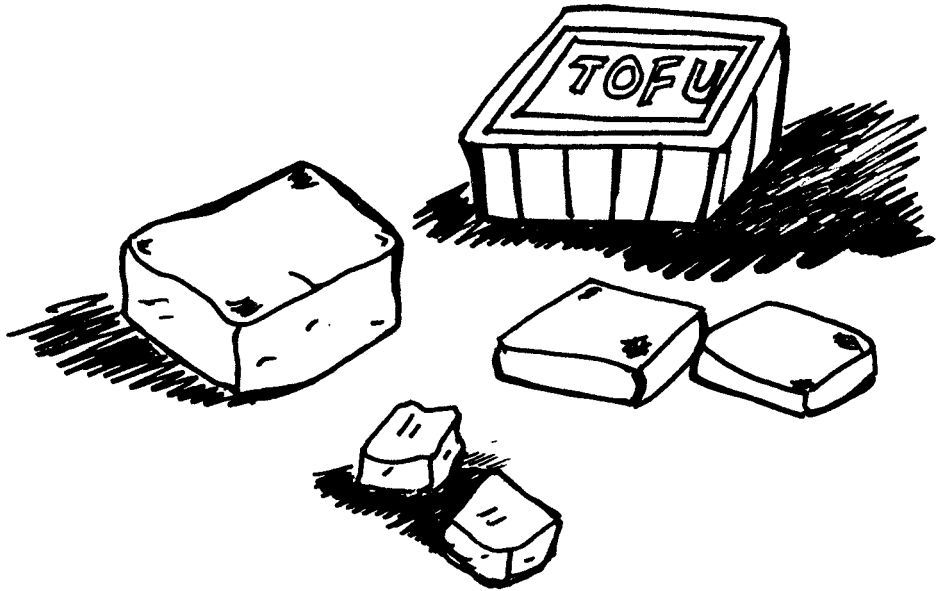
-Soybeans can produce 20 times more protein than could be raised on an acre of land used to feed beef cattle.

-Soybeans contain over 40% protein: more than any other plant or animal food.

-One-half cup of soybeans provides the same amount of usable protein as a 5-ounce piece of steak.

-from THE BOOK OF TOFU

by W. Shurtleff & A. Aoyagi



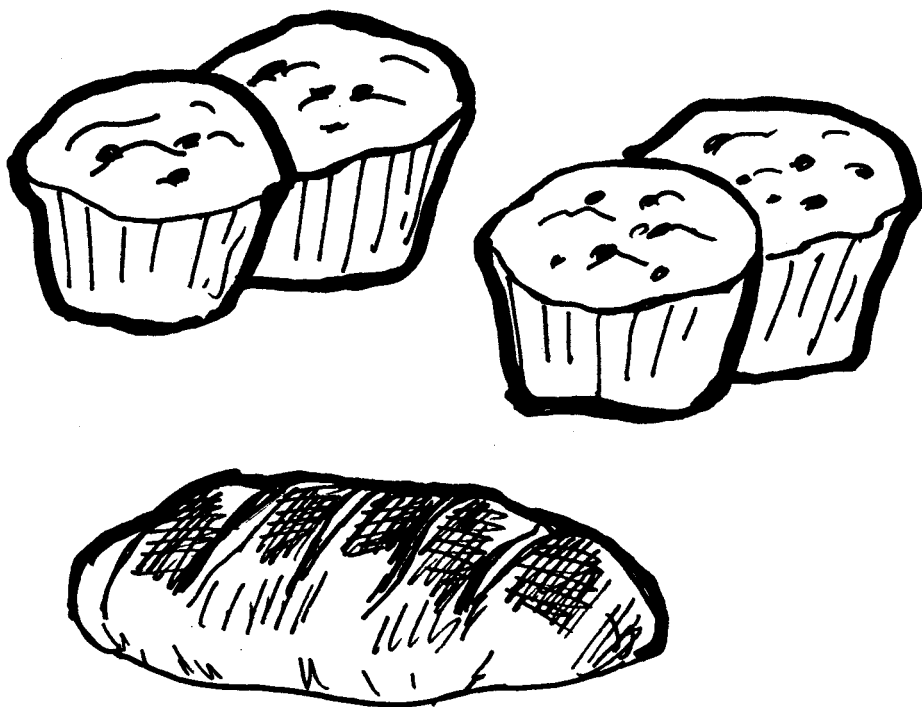
## SAY "NO" TO WASTE

Those who insist on a  
meat-centered diet  
Contribute directly to the  
world-wide lack of food.  
Squandering grains to force-feed  
livestock is found inefficient  
When the ratio of grains consumed  
to meat-yield is impartially  
viewed.  
So, domestic animals are  
stuffed unnaturally,  
While the world's starving  
people suffer unbearably.

Why not resolve to change the  
habit of "meat and potatoes"  
By exploring pure foods like  
soy beans and tomatoes?  
By not being selfish, we help  
relieve the food crisis,  
And lives will not be lost on  
our account, nor greedy profits  
amassed in the process.

Just by changing our daily fare,  
We are giving on a  
world-wide scale!

raisin-bran muffins  
or  
stone-ground wheat bread



## NATIONAL ENERGY

Across this expanse of land we  
call home,  
Acres of wheat, barley, millet,  
rye, and oats are grown.  
Such grains as these contain  
plant protein  
And nutrients sufficient to  
fill our needs.

If we all ate grains  
instead of meat,  
We would still use less than  
animals must eat  
To get rippled with fat--glutted  
and sleek  
Enough for blue-ribbon steaks  
to sate our greed.

If we fellow-countrymen switched  
to plant protein diets,  
Our continent alone would have  
grains in such excess  
That the people who live on  
other continents  
Would not have to bear hunger's  
torment and distress.

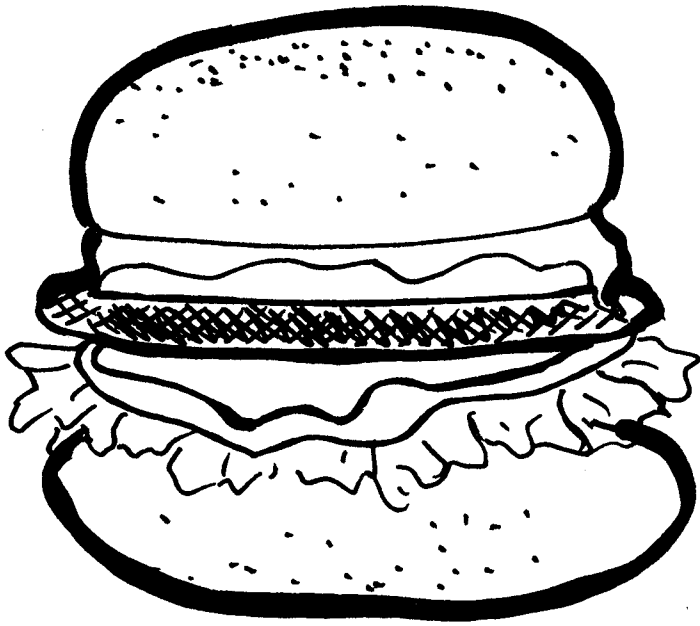


pumpkin and squash



## HARVEST

The earth yields a rich and  
bounteous harvest:  
Wheat, barley, rye, oats, and  
and rice,  
Squash, nuts, beans and peas,  
Succulent apples, melons,  
Juicy apricots, oranges  
and plums.  
Unparalleled source of  
nutriment and flavor,  
These foods are the key to  
good health.



soyburger

## PLANT PROTEIN

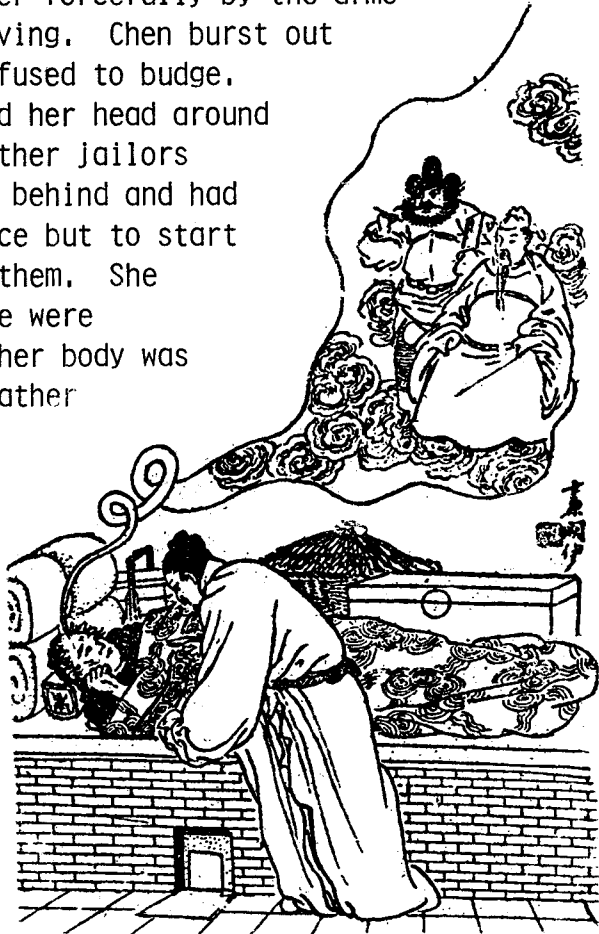
When the protein in your diet comes from vegetable products, such as soybeans, nuts, grains, and beans, you consume much less cholesterol and saturated fat than you would if you ate meat. Vegetable proteins are also nutritious, satisfying, and cheaper than meat proteins. A vegetarian diet can greatly cut down the rise of arteriosclerosis, heart attacks, gout, cancer, and many other diseases related to eating meat.

Public Records  
on  
Cause and Effect

MAIDSERVANT CHEN MAO TZU  
ENTERS THE UNDERWORLD

-recorded by Upasika  
Chen Man

One October night in the Chia Tzu year, the maidservant, Chen Mao Tzu, was sleeping during a heavy illness and saw three ghost jailors coming to fetch her. The jailor in front held up a candle and grabbed her forcefully by the arms to get her moving. Chen burst out crying and refused to budge. But she turned her head around and saw two other jailors pressing from behind and had no other choice but to start running with them. She felt as if she were intoxicated; her body was light as a feather and floated in thin air.



It could glide along on its own accord. (At this time, it was her spirit that was traveling, not her physical body, which is why she felt she didn't have to exert any effort.) They were moving along very fast. Whenever the candlelight fell on the ground, she could make out earth, dirt and stones, but everything slightly at a distance was pitch-black. In a short while they came to a river. There was a bridge several tens of feet long, but only one foot wide. Black colored water flowed beneath the bridge. Mao Tzu was frightened and didn't dare move. The ghost put her on his back and carried her across. They moved on for a while. By now the road had become a flat path laid out in stone. Then they came to a big hall which had red walls and an extremely tall gate. They stepped inside to a courtyard about as big as a plot of land. They made their entrance through seven separate gateways and finally entered the innermost hall. It was a big room with a bench in the middle over which a judge presided. The judge looked about sixty years old. He wore a black robe, and his hair and beard were snowy white. He had a very distinguished and stern manner. Beside the bench were other investigators presiding over a hearing.

The three ghost-jailors knelt down and reported. The judge opened up the file and asked Mao Tzu her name. Mao Tzu, in tears, reported her name. The judge went over the file very quickly and started to make entries on certain pages. He wrote with great speed. After he made the entries, he slammed the top of the bench with a bamboo slat and started to berate the ghost jailors. The judge

scolded them for a long while, and in the end ordered them to take Chen Mao Tzu back to her home. Then, as he turned toward Mao Tzu, his face took on a kindly appearance and he comforted her, "Do not be afraid. They will see you back."

Then the ghost-jailors started to head back, with Mao Tzu following close behind. In no time, they were at the door of her house. One of the jailors gave Mao Tzu a push, she lunged forward and suddenly came to. She woke up again into the sunny world. After she regained full consciousness, she started to tell the people of her household about her experiences in the underworld. She felt that the atmosphere was extremely eerie and creepy. She couldn't remember a lot of what she saw, but she did remember seeing a giant vat underneath the great hall. The vat was at least six or seven feet tall, with a huge fire lit underneath it and an iron yaksha ghost standing watch over the fire. She didn't know what was inside the vat. "The underworld officers and ghost-jailors said a lot in their conversation, but I was so scared that I couldn't recall much of what they said."

\* \* \*

## TWO PIGS TRY TO ESCAPE

-from *THE BOOK OF TSUI*

In the year 601 of the Tsui Dynasty, there was a person from Wei Nan who was lodging with a family. Once, in the middle of the night, he heard some pigs talking among themselves.

One pig said, "It's the end of the year. Tomorrow they will kill me and make a pork dish out of me. Where should I escape to?"

Another pig said, "Let's go to my sister's house at the north end of the river."

The two pigs actually went there. The next day, the owner, unable to find the two pigs, suspected the tenant of stealing and hiding them. The tenant told the owner about the conversation he had overheard the night before. Together they went to that place north of the river and sure enough they retrieved the pigs.

\* \* \*

## YO ER SAN REINCARNATED AS AN OX

-from *THE RECORDS OF YI CHIEN PING*

Once, there was a rich man called Yo Er San, who lived in Da Tou Village. He died of an illness during the third year of the Shao Hsing reign (1133). At that time, in the eastern village of K'un Mountain, a white ox was born. Its owner reported that along its ribs there was a tuft of black fur which was naturally and clearly grown



to form seven characters: "YO ER SAN WAS ONCE A JAILER."

In fact, when Yo was still a poor man, he did serve as a jailer. During his office, he did many secretive and evil things. As a result, he was reborn as an ox. His son offered twenty-thousand dollars to ransom him. But that family refused the offer. In the end, the ox was butchered.

\* \* \*

TRANSGRESSIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT  
BRING REBIRTH AS A PIG

-from *ANNALS OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS*

Great Master Ling Yin Hui said:  
In the sixth month of the eighth year, during the K'ang Hsi Reign Period (1667), a beancurd shop in the city of Soochow run by Chao Te P'u, offered two pigs for sale. The asking price was 2 and 1/2 ounces of silver. On the night of the fifteenth, the pigs started to talk.

They said, "Because we violated the precept against sexual misconduct, we have been reborn as pigs in this life, and now we're about to be slaughtered."

At first, the Chao couple thought that the sounds came from people passing by on the streets outside. But upon listening closely, they found out that the sounds were coming from the pigsty. They were astounded!

On the sixteenth day, they heard another pig say, "Tonight is the Jung Yüan Festival. On this day, the earth-ruling deity pardons offenders. If

we can be let off and not be killed, let's go together to the Western Gardens Temple to cultivate the Way."

Another pig said, "It's my wish to go to the Divine Tombs."

When Chao and his wife heard this, they became even more startled. The affair was made known to the public. Their neighbor, Wang, offered 1.6 ounces of silver to ransom the pigs, and then he liberated them. This event was personally witnessed by Hsü Hsiao Chun.

\* \* \*

#### BORN AS A PIG TO SETTLE OLD SCORES

-from *RECORDS OF RETRIBUTIONS*

During the spring of the eighth year of the K'ang Hsi Reign Period (1669), the butcher, Liu Ch'i, bought a pig with an ounce of silver. Since he himself was busy, he asked someone else to butcher the pig for him.

That night, he had a dream. The pig assumed a human form and said to him, "Today, if you had put out 1.2 ounces of silver to buy me, then the debt I owe from a past life would have been totally paid up and I could have been reborn as a human being in my next life. But, since the price you paid was short .2 ounces of silver, I will have to be reborn as a pig once more to pay back the debt in full. Today, If you had killed me yourself, later you would have to undergo the suffering of being cut once by a blade. But since you got

somebody else to butcher me, it's to be feared that in the future you'll have to suffer several more cuts."



On that same night, the pig-person also appeared in a dream to the man who sold the pig. He said, "Last life I owed you 1,2 ounces of silver but today you only got paid one ounce of silver for me. Therefore, I'll have to be reborn one more time as a pig to pay you back in full."

The pig seller immediately said, "No! Forget the debt!"

The pig answered, "Although you may not care whether I pay back or not,

nonetheless, the officials of the underworld will not allow it to be any other way. Accounts have to be completely cleared up. However, selling pigs and butchering them is a profession that incurs many offenses. Therefore, I am exhorting you to stop engaging in such business."

The next day, the pig seller told the pig butcher about his dream. The two found that the information given in their dreams coincided. They brought forth fear in their hearts, and from that day onward, they changed their professions.

## GREED LED TO REBIRTH AS A DONKEY

-from RECORDS OF RETRIBUTIONS

On Flower Mountain, Chin Ling, there was a cultivator called Chu, who did not believe in cause and effect and retribution. He was greedy for food kept in the monastic storerooms. One day he drowned in the public pond just outside of the storerooms. Soon he appeared in a dream to the monk Tao Chao and said, "I have been reincarnated as a donkey. Tomorrow I'll start paying back my debts."

The next day a donkey did show up at the temple grounds. Whenever people called it "Cultivator Chu," it would trot over quickly. Moreover, this donkey always liked to go to the storerooms to get some tasty morsels. The donkey's temperament was just the same as when he was a person. After several years, the donkey fell into the pond and drowned.

\* \* \*

## SEVENTEEN PEOPLE REINCARNATED AS PIGS AND DOGS

-from RECORDS FOR EVINCING BELIEF

Wu Lan Shu related:

In the year Ren Yin of the K'ang Hsi reign period, I was staying at a shop at Ching Kan. During the fifth watch of the night (3 a.m.), I

heard many people pounding frantically on the door. The proprietor thought that they might be thieves and peeped out from the door crack. He saw a policeman checking off a list of thirteen people's names. When he finished, another policeman, brandishing a staff, drove the people whose names were checked to the back of the house. Four other people mingled with the group planning to go along, but the policeman yelled out loudly, "Hey! The four of you belong to the neighbor Wan Tsan Ming!" Then he drove the four people into the next house.

The next morning when we woke up, we discovered that in the pig sty at the back of the house thirteen piglets had just been born. And next door, at Wan Tsan Ming's household, four puppies had just been born.

\* \* \*

### FLAG-BEARER REBORN THRICE AS A PIG

-from *RECORDS FOR EVINCING BELIEF*

When the official Chin Wen T'ung was ruling in Tung Ching, among his staff was a flag-bearer who claimed that he himself had been reincarnated thrice as a pig. He remembered that the most excruciating suffering he had to undergo was when his flesh was sliced into pieces. Later on, unable to take the suffering of being a pig, he beseeched the lords of the underworld to take pity on him, and as a result he was reborn as a mule.

During his reincarnation as a mule, he was part of a mule team. Once while transporting a

certain customer, the mule team he was part of was ambushed by bandits. The flag-bearer, then the mule, remembers thinking, "If this customer gets robbed, it will be my fault." Thereupon he exerted all of his strength and leaped across the river. The customer made good his escape, but the mule was drowned. Because the lords of the underworld felt that the mule had been loyal in saving the customer's life at the expense of sacrificing his own, they allowed him to be reborn as a human this time, and moreover, to even earn a post as a minor official.

The flag-bearer himself related this story, and his superior Chin Wen T'ung often told people about the flag-bearer's tale.

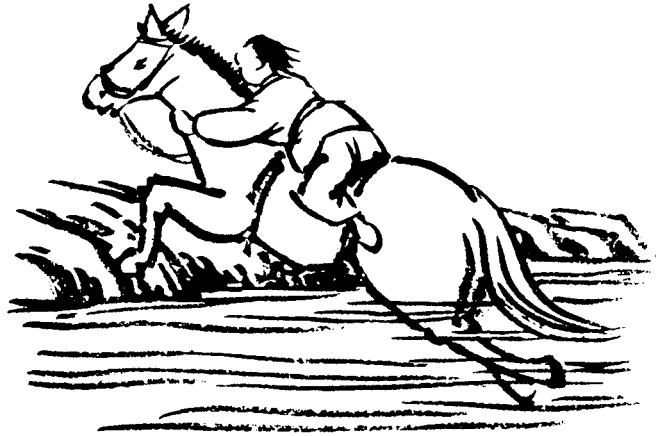
\* \* \*

#### KILLING SOMEONE BY MISTAKE AS AN OFFICIAL AND BEING BORN AS AN ANIMAL

-from *RECORDS FOR EVINCING BELIEF*

In Chiang Nan Province, there was a military officer who recalled that in a past life, when he was an official, he made a mistaken judgment and condemned a criminal to death who did not deserve it. Upon his own death, as a punishment for this act of injustice, he was reborn as a horse. Even when the horse was transporting customers to and from the guest house, it could recall these former events and yet could not speak about them.

One day, the horse had to carry a passenger who was on some very urgent business. As they



were ascending a treacherous mountain pass, the passenger mercilessly whipped the horse. The horse felt that the pain was so unbearable it would be better to just leap over the mountain pass to its death. But then another thought crossed its mind:

"Last life I ordered the death of someone by mistake and fell into an animal's body. If I continue to make mistakes in this life, I will never get out of my misery." With that change of thought, he bore his lot in patience and peace.

So this life he was reborn as a human being, and on top of that, he became an official. However, he remembered very clearly the suffering he underwent when he was a horse, so he ordered several hundred soft saddles to be sent to the stables, because he remembered how painful those wooden saddles were on the horses' backs.

This event has been related by Wang Mei Ren. There is also an interesting aside: on that military officer's left leg, there were still a few inches of horse hair. Upon seeing that, most people believed without fail.

MALTREATING ANOTHER AND BEING REBORN  
AS A SHE-GOAT

-from *THE RECORDS OF KUANG REN*

Liu Tao Yüan, a county officer of Feng Ch'i, spent a night at the house of the Ch'in family. That night he dreamt of a woman who came and cried to him, asking for help.

She said, "I am the wife of Mr. Ch'in of this family. When I was Mrs. Ch'in, I plotted the death of a certain concubine in the household, and as a punishment was sent off to rebirth as a goat. I am now in the goat pen, and tomorrow they will slaughter me so they can treat you to a meal. I don't mind dying, but I am carrying a little goat in my stomach, and should he die on my account, my offenses would only increase."

The next morning, Liu reported the dream to the owner of that family. But by then, the she-goat had already been killed. The Ch'in family was torn apart by grief. They took the little goat, stuffed it back into its mother's belly and buried them both.



A VILLAINOUS MINISTER FALLS INTO THE EVIL PATHS  
AND IS STRUCK REPEATEDLY BY LIGHTNING

-from *RECORDS OF THE OCEAN OF PEOPLE*

Li Lin P'u was a minister of the T'ang Dynasty and a very evil man. Although he died a peaceful death, in his subsequent rebirths he was struck repeatedly by lightning. In the T'ang Dynasty, during the Yüan He reign period (c.806) in the state of Wei Chou, a prostitute was struck dead by lightning. On her ribs the three characters "Li Lin P'u" appeared in bold scarlet. In the Sung Dynasty, during the Shao Hsing reign (1131-1167), a daughter from the Han family was also struck down by lightning. On her body there appeared in scarlet the characters, "T'ang Minister Li Lin P'u." Moreover, in the Ming Dynasty, during the Hung Wu reign (1368-1399), the family Lu of Wu Mountain once killed a chicken. On the back of the chicken there appeared three characters, "Li Lin P'u." From that one knows that the former minister was undergoing retribution in the path of animals.

\* \* \*

A PIG APPEARS AS A HUMAN BEING

-from *RECORDS FOR EVINCING BELIEF*

Once, in the City of Wen, there was a man by the name of Hsü Han Tsai, who was a butcher and a seller of pork. Every day he would kill over ten pigs,

After several years of this, one evening as he was closing up, the slaughtered pigs in his shop all of a sudden assumed human form. Hsü was terrified. From then on, he deeply believed that animals are in fact reincarnations of human beings--that humans are reborn as animals, and that animals get reborn as people, as they revolve around and around. He saw clearly how frightening the revolving wheel of the six paths is! Hsü immediately asked some monks to hold repentance ceremonies to cross over those dead spirits, and from then on gave up his profession.

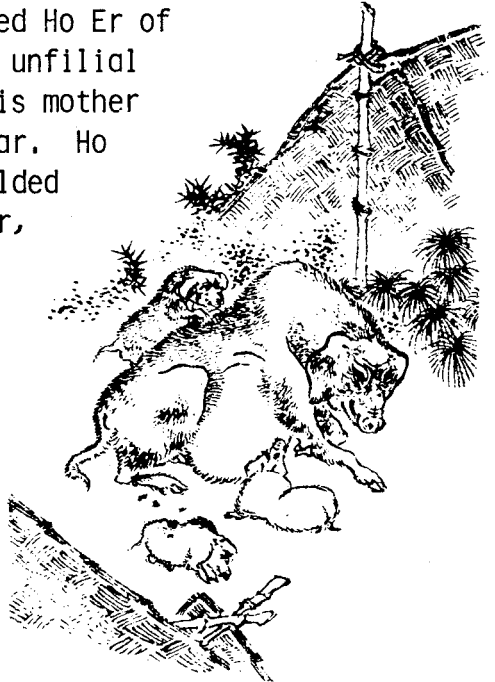
\* \* \*

### UNFILIAL SON REBORN AS A PIG

-from *THE RECORDS OF THE PATRIARCH FRAGRANT*

There was a man named Ho Er of Kan Tan Province who was unfilial to his parents. Once, his mother gave some rice to a beggar. Ho Er flew into a rage, scolded and struck his own mother, and threatened to throw her out. His wife and son tearfully begged him to stop, but he would not listen.

In a short while, his body broke out in poisonous sores. The sores oozed filth and pus, and Ho Er bled so profusely that he died.



After his death, he appeared to his son in a dream, saying, "Because of being unfilial to my mother, I have been punished and am now reborn as a pig of the family of Chang Er in the Capitol City. Quickly, come and save me!"

The son immediately went there and found that the Chang family did have a pig. That pig had a pig's body and a human face which resembled that of his father. But that family refused to sell the pig. This happened during the 39th year of the K'ang Hsi Reign Period (1700).

\* \* \*

#### REBORN AS A DONKEY TO PAY BACK OLD DEBTS

During the twentieth year of the K'ang Hsi reign period (1682), in Ching Te County, at a place called Twelve Maps, there was a person called Liu Ying. He was a secretary clerk for the magistrate of the records. When Liu was at Ning Kuo County collecting taxes on land, he hired a donkey because the journey was long. Once, while traveling on the eastern coast, Liu wanted the donkey to move fast, but the donkey refused. So Liu started to whip the animal. At that, the donkey spoke up, "I don't owe you very much from last life and already my debt is almost completely paid up, so you shouldn't beat me!"

When Liu Ying heard that, he was scared out of his wits. Later on he commissioned the building of a rest house along the eastern coast, so that passers-by could take a rest under the shade. From then on he started to do a lot of good deeds, and as a result his children and grandchildren all obtained a fine education.

## RECTIFYING A BREACH OF FAITH

Hsung Chi Wen and Yang Wen Chung were two good friends who lived during the first years of the Republic. Both of them had businesses in Manchuria. Later, Hsung died of an illness. On his deathbed he entrusted his life savings of over a thousand taels of silver to Yang. He said, "Take this money and pay for the funeral. Of the one thousand taels left, take five hundred and give it to my son. You can have the other five hundred for yourself."

Yang promised he would do this. But, because there were no relatives of Hsung around, he pocketed the entire one thousand taels of silver for himself.

Now, Yang had a son called Chi K'ang who suspected that his father had come into his fortune somehow through devious means. This idea troubled the boy for years. In a while the young boy went to private school. One day, he came upon a passage in the LI CHI (BOOK OF PROPRIETY), which said,

Do not accept wealth through unprin-  
cipated means;

Do not shirk from a disaster when  
you have it coming to you.

The two lines seemed a little hard to understand, but they struck a bell, so the boy went to ask his teacher, "What does it mean when it says, 'Do not accept wealth through unprincipled means?'"

The teacher said, "It means that if the wealth didn't come through to you rightfully, don't take it. Don't use any trickery to try to get it."

Chi K'ang continued to ask, "What if one takes that wealth anyway?"

The schoolmaster's manner stiffened, and he very sternly said, "Then you would have to go through the retribution!"

Upon hearing this, Chi K'ang felt even more anxious. Thereupon, he made a resolve, "In the future, when I become independent and make my own career, I will have to return double the amount to its rightful owner."

In a few years, when the revolutionary army marched north, Chi K'ang was staying at a certain hostel in Hankow. The tenant in the room next door was a young man with fine features whom Chi K'ang found to be an amiable fellow. The two became fast friends. One day, for no good reason, the young man was arrested by the police. In a short while, the police came and nabbed Chi K'ang as well. They said to him, "Your neighbor is a spy for the revolutionary army. You must know the inside story. Spill it out, and we won't harm you; but if you don't, then we'll flog you to death."

By now, Chi K'ang was steeped in the teachings of the passage he had learned in school. Suddenly, the second part of that teaching surfaced crystal-clear in his mind. "Do not shirk from a disaster when you have it coming to you." And so, he underwent repeated flogging but refused to say anything that would incriminate his young neighbor, no matter how the police humiliated and abused him. Through those numerous beatings, Chi K'ang didn't utter a single falsehood. There were deep gashes in his body from the flogging and he was bleeding

heavily. Finally, since the police couldn't get anything out of him, they let both Chi K'ang and his young neighbor go.

The next afternoon, after Chi K'ang returned from the hospital, he suddenly felt someone tap him on the shoulders. "Chi K'ang, thanks to your spirit of 'not shirking from disasters when you have it coming to you,' you have saved the life of my son. The debt of the thousand taels of silver has already been paid back many times over." Chi K'ang turned and saw an old man with snow white hair. He said, "Who are you, Sir?"

The old man smiled and said, "I am the father of your neighbor, also the deceased friend of your father--Hsung Chi Wen." After saying those words, the old man disappeared. Chi K'ang suddenly came to a bright understanding! Cause and effect was, indeed, not off by a hair. He felt a heavy load lifted off his shoulders. From that time on, he was an even more fervent believer in cause and effect.

\* \* \*

#### FEIGNING VEGETARIANISM HE SAVES A CHICKEN'S LIFE AND AVOIDS DEATH BY DROWNING

In the area of Liang Ch'i, there was once a peasant who paid a visit to his relative's house. The relative wanted to kill a chicken to treat him to a good meal, but the peasant said, "No, no. I am a vegetarian. Don't bother." On his way back home, he went to the docks to catch a ferry. An old man appeared on the shore and shouted out, "There is a man in that boat who pretends to be a

vegetarian. Do not take him across." So the other passengers pushed the peasant off the boat. Once the peasant got back to shore, the old man could no longer be found. A few minutes later, the peasant looked back at the boat, which was by now in the middle of the river. A huge windstorm had suddenly come up from nowhere and turned the boat over. Just because he had saved the life of one chicken, he was liberated from the disaster of being drowned. From this story we know that when we bring forth a good heart to help others, it is we ourselves who finally benefit.

DURING SICKNESS, HE VOWS TO DO GOOD  
AND INCREASES HIS LIFESPAN AND OFFICIAL RANK

-from *EXHORTATIONS TO CHERISH LIFE*

There was once a man, Ch'ien T'ang T'ou, who was a magistrate of a prefecture. One year, he came down with a serious illness. A doctor prescribed the wrong medicine, which aggravated his sickness till he reached the point of death. In his sick condition, he repented of his offenses and vowed that if he recovered he would exhaust his means to benefit others and aid the poor.

One night, Kuan Yin Bodhisattva appeared to him in a dream and said, "In your past life you were an official in Hu Pei Province. Although you were fair in your litigations, nonetheless, you were quite mean. You were unselfish, but because of your excessively harsh policy, you decreased your own blessings and virtue. Moreover, you took many lives, so that in this life your fate is to have a

short life as a retribution. But, since you have repented, the officers in the underworld have decided to give you another chance. Your lifespan has been increased, as well as your emoluments and fortune."

After Ch'ien awoke, he taught his entire family to refrain from killing. They often liberated living creatures that had been sold into captivity. Eventually Ch'ien rose to the rank of magistrate of Yuan Chou Province and served his country well. Even the Emperor commended him on his service, and of course, he recovered from his illness.

\* \* \*



Life at  
the City of  
Ten Thousand  
Buddhas



CAUSE AND EFFECT OF  
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Why do some people have  
neither father nor mother?

Because in the past they  
gunned down birds.

Why do some people enjoy  
many children and grandchildren?

Because in the past they  
released birds from their cages.



## TRANSFERENCE

May those of the four kinds of birth  
ascend to the jeweled ground, and  
Those in the three existences transform  
and abide in the lotus pool.  
May hungry ghosts as numerous as Ganges'  
sands certify to the  
Three Worthy Stages,  
And may the myriad sorts of sentient  
beings ascend to the Ten Grounds.



Purifying the boundaries at the proposed site of the Great Hall of Heroes, which will accomodate 10,000 worshippers

When I obtain delicious food,  
I vow that living beings  
Will fulfill their vows  
And be without envy in their  
minds.

-AVATAMSAKA SUTRA  
"Pure Conduct" Chapter



Happiness is sharing pure vegetarian  
food offered to the Sangha and Worthy  
Sages of the ten directions.

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

-Mahatma Gandhi  
Hindu National Leader  
and social reformer



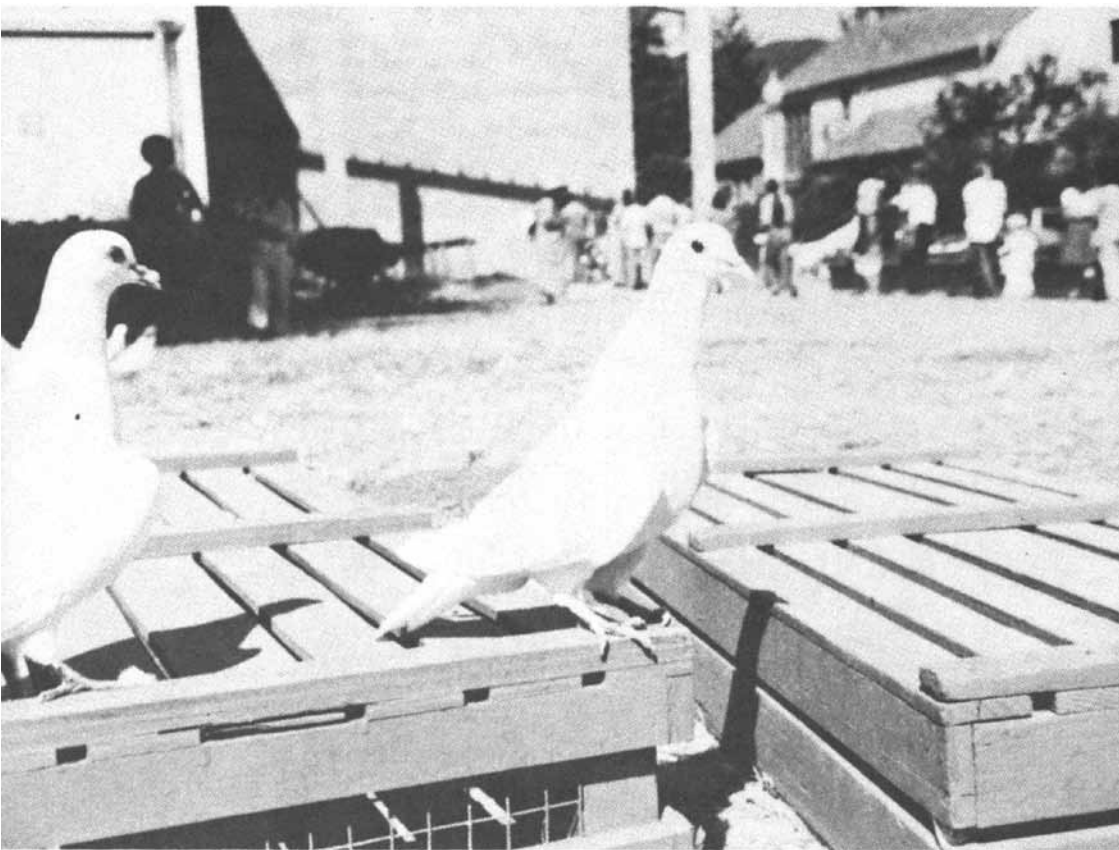


The Assembly at the Sagely City  
liberates wild and domestic fowl.



### Bathing the Buddha:

Sacred ritual performed every year on Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday, symbolic of the act of cleansing away filth and bad karma from the mind and of the rejuvenation from the water of Dharma.

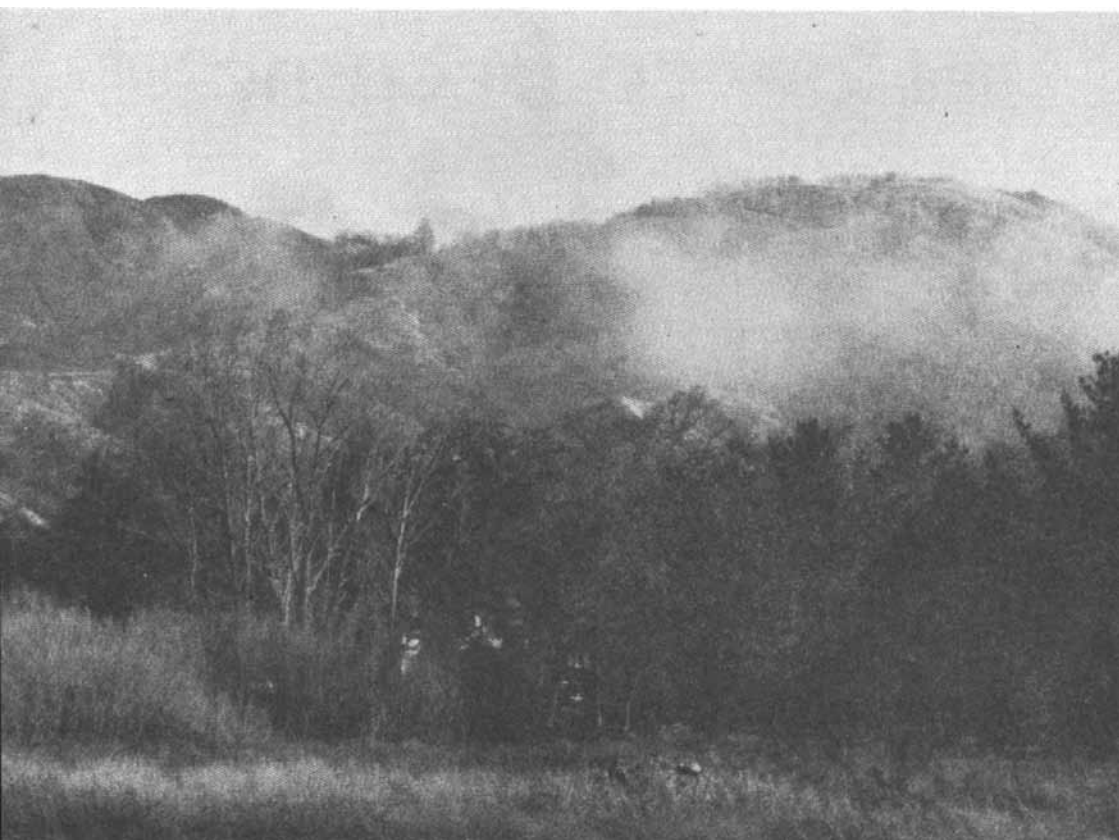


"It is good to maintain and  
cherish life; it is evil to destroy  
and to check life."

-Albert Schweitzer  
humanitarian

When I see a high mountain,  
I vow that living beings  
Will have such transcendent  
good roots  
That none can reach their  
summit.

-AVATAMSAKA SUTRA  
"Pure Conduct" Chapter



How to Become  
an  
Upright Person:

instructional talks by  
the Venerable  
Abbot Hua

WHEN THE GREAT WAY IS ABOLISHED,  
THEN HUMANENESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS COME

In this day and age, people's hearts are no longer akin to the ancients'. Morality is quickly losing ground, and as the days pass by, people flow down with the current. They don't know how to strike upward; they only know how to sink further down.

Before, when there weren't so many schools and not so many students attending them, people were not so upside down and rotten. Now, there are many schools and many students attending them, and the number of evil people in the world increases each day.

In ancient times, people went to school in order to understand principle. They wanted to understand the principles of being human--how to do no evil and offer up all good. They also studied the Eight Virtues of the Confucian School: filiality, fraternity, loyalty, faith, propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, and a sense of shame. But nowadays people are going to school merely for the sake of fame and profit--they want name and gain for themselves. So, ming li (明理, learned and refined) and ming li (名利, fame and gain) sound a lot alike, but their meanings are poles apart.

Those people who are in it for the sake of fame and profit will think this way: "What courses should I study in order to strike it rich? Should I study medicine? Or, maybe I should take up science, because those two professions really

bring in a lot of money." They are in it for that.

They wouldn't think in this way: "I am studying now because I want to be of benefit to mankind. If I am going to become a doctor, I want to be able to save the world and revive the lives of people. I want to benefit others while benefiting myself."

Most people who study these days are mainly in it for their own gain, and they don't know how to be considerate of others. Present-day professors as much as openly encourage their students to take drugs, to engage in loose sexual behavior, and to do things that are harmful to others and which scandalize the world. It's no wonder young people become worse and worse off with each passing day!

Lao Tzu put it this way:

When the great Way is abolished,  
then come humaneness and  
righteousness.

When wisdom comes forth,  
there is treachery.

When the six kinds of relatives  
are not harmonious,  
then filial sons appear.

When the country is in turmoil,  
then the loyal ministers  
are revealed.

"When the great Way is abolished," when the great Tao has disappeared, "then come humaneness and righteousness." This is because when the great Way truly abides, humaneness and beneficence will not be seen as separate entities--they are already



embodied within the Tao.

Lao Tzu continues to say, "When wisdom comes forth, there is treachery." When there are people who have great knowledge and intelligence, then from among them, crooks will appear. That's because those intelligent people know how to cheat others. The smarter they are, the better they get at taking advantage of others.

"When the six kinds of relatives are not harmonious, then filial sons appear." Basically, families should be such that "the father is compassionate, the sons are filial, the elder brother is kindly, and the younger brother is respectful." When the six types of close relatives are in harmony in that way, they don't contend among themselves. Such families are peaceful and happy. But when the six types of close relatives are not in harmony, then the father is not compassionate, the sons are not filial, the elder brother is not friendly, and the younger brother is not respectful. It's at such times that the truly filial and compassionate sons will be revealed.

For example, the great emperor, Ta Shun--the great sage king who ruled Zhung Kuo around 2200 B.C. --had "a father who was stubborn, a mother who was licentious, and a younger brother who was arrogant." But Emperor Shun himself always did his best to fulfill his filial responsibilities.

Emperor Shun's father was extremely stubborn. He was also described as "a blind old man," for though he had eyes, he was blind to how to be a human person. He couldn't discriminate right from wrong,

black from white, crooked from straight, bad from good. He had such a fine son, and yet he could not appreciate him.

It was said of Emperor Shun's mother that she was promiscuous. She was his stepmother, an unruly, treacherous, and bigoted woman.

Then there was Hsiang, his younger brother, who was the son of his stepmother. The younger brother was extremely conceited and didn't respect his elder brother at all. So theirs was a case of the elder brother being friendly but the younger brother being disrespectful.

Although he found himself in such an unfavorable situation with his family, Shun continued to be very filial. He was respectful to his parents and kind to his younger brother.

One day Shun's brother and stepmother plotted to kill him. They told him to go into the barn for some rice, and once Shun got inside the barn, his brother set the barn on fire with the intention of consuming him in the blaze. Hsiang returned home elated, thinking that he must have gotten rid of Shun--when he walked Shun!

The brother and stepmother wondered, "Why wasn't he done in? How did he get back here?" They asked him, "How is it that you weren't killed in the fire?"

Shun replied, "The minute I saw the flames, I grabbed a couple of straw hats and climbed up to the loft and jumped out. I didn't suffer any injuries or sprains, nor was I burned by the fire."

After that unsuccessful attempt, they plotted to murder him with another method. They told him

to go clean the well of its sediment. That involved going down inside the well and clearing up the accumulated sand and silt. Then, once Shun got into the well, all three of them--his father, mother, and younger brother--got a big boulder and blocked up the well with it. This time there was no way for Shun to get out, and he thought, "This time I've really had it." From this story came the Zhung Wen (Chinese) adage, "A big rock was thrown into the well," referring to a totally hopeless situation.

Strangely enough, however, from inside the well there happened to be a tunnel, and Shun crept out through that underground passageway. Some people say that a white fox had dug the tunnel. So that's how Emperor Shun was saved.

Although Shun's parents had tried to harm him, he still didn't harbor any hatred in his mind.

Meanwhile, as soon as Hsiang returned home from putting the boulder down the well, he was ready to divide up Shun's property. As he walked into the house he sang this song to himself:

The cows and the sheep can go to my parents,  
And the grains in the barn can go to  
them as well.  
But give me the spears and the flute and  
the zephyr,  
Along with my two sisters-in-law--  
they should all come to me.

Having just finished singing his song, Hsiang

walked into Shun's bedroom and lo and behold, there was Shun, seated upright at the edge of his bed! Hsiang was scared out of his wits and thought, "He must be a ghost. He died and his spirit has come back to haunt the house!" He was really frightened. But Shun comforted him saying, "Come, sit down, Don't be afraid." He didn't harbor any hatred at all toward his brother.

So, that's how it was long ago in the days of Emperor Shun--even then people were very wicked. But, in order to exhaust his efforts in practicing the way of filial piety, Shun still acted as a filial son should. That's an example of "When the six relatives are not harmonious, the filial sons appear."

Lao Tzu continues, "When the country is in turmoil, then the loyal ministers are revealed." When a country is at peace, even if there are loyal ministers, they won't be obvious. It's only when the country is in turmoil that one can tell who's loyal and who is not.

In the Southern Sung Dynasty (12th and 13th centuries), during the life of the great general, Yao Fei, the country was torn apart by factions and invasions from foreign tribes. Prime Minister Ch'in K'uai was extremely jealous of Yao Fei's talents, and so he framed Yao Fei in order to have him put to death. So it's said of Yao Fei that "his name carries a perfume that will linger for a thousand generations," whereas Ch'in K'uai was so notorious that "his name will stink for ten

thousand years." In both cases, these men earned reputations, but the fame of one differs from the fame of the other. Yao Fei gained a glorious renown, whereas Ch'in K'uai became notoriously infamous.

Another case in point is that of Wen T'ien Hsiang, who was a minister of the Southern Sung Dynasty. During his lifetime the country was also troubled, yet he remained exceptionally loyal to his emperor. He never surrendered his troops.

Those are some examples of loyal ministers who came forth when their country was in turmoil.

By the same token, right now at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas we are building a Way-place under extremely difficult circumstances. But it's only when circumstances are really difficult that we can see who the real Dharma Protectors are. True Dharma Protectors take Buddhism as their own personal responsibility. They are people who can muster their strength and resources and exhaust their efforts in establishing the Way-place. It's because of such people that the Proper Dharma will surely spread and flourish!

## EATING FLESH: PROS AND CONS

The Tao is near  
but people seek afar.  
Things are easy,  
but people seek what's difficult.

People who study the Buddhadharmā shouldn't hunt for bargains. That is what worldly people do --they're always looking for the easy way out. But people who study the Buddhadharmā should act in exactly the opposite way. Don't always be looking for a bargain. The more you try to get off easy, the bigger will be the loss you take. What kind of big loss will you take? You will make mistakes in cause and effect and thereby fall into the hells.

Just now, someone asked me, "Is it good to eat meat or not good to eat meat?" I said, "There is good in eating meat and there is not good in eating meat." What's the good about eating meat? Well, "It's delicious and nutritious, too," you think. And why is meat-eating not good? The worst thing about it that's not good is that after you digest it, it smells worse than any other type of food. It makes your body stink.

Second is that you also form a company with whatever kind of meat you eat. Cows set up conditions with cows, pigs congregate with other pigs --you form a big corporation with whatever type of animal you eat. For example, if you eat a lot of pork, you'll become tied up into a company of pigs. So, you figure it out: in the future

will you or will you not have to become a pig? The same applies to cows, chickens, sheep, fish and so forth. You get involved in the karma that those creatures create when you eat their meat; you get all mixed up together with them. The karma you create as a person gets all mixed up with the pig, and the karma the pig creates gets all mixed up with you. In a few years you have a big corporation on your hands. And so obviously the next step that follows is that you will eventually become the type of animal whose flesh you were most fond of eating. If you ate pig meat, you will have to become a pig. If you ate cow meat, you will have to become a cow. And it won't be a simple matter of replacing the meat you ate. True enough, you will have to pay that back, but not as a person--you yourself will have to become a cow, you'll have to be a pig, in order to pay back those debts.

I also say that people who eat meat take a loss after they die, while people who don't eat meat take a loss while they are still alive. What do I mean by that? If you don't eat meat, you miss out on delicious flavors, and the food you eat is probably quite bland and not so exciting. But if you take this little bit of loss while you are still alive, when you die you won't have to become a pig, or a cow, or a sheep, and you won't have to fall into the hells.

To sum it up, there's a saying:

To endure suffering is to end suffering;  
To spend blessings is to end blessing.

If you remember those two lines, that'll be good enough.

I notice that there are some among you who still have doubts about the principles I just expounded. You don't believe that if people eat pork they will eventually have to become pigs, and if people eat beef they will have to become cows. "I don't believe that principle," you say. Well, not to talk about pigs and cows, let's just talk about onions and garlic. When you eat them your entire body reeks of onions and garlic. And if it's that way with onions and garlic, obviously it's the same way with meat. Of course, we do form a company with whatever we eat. Whether you believe it or not, I leave it up to you. Americans like to eat American onions, and so just about every American smells like onions and garlic. They also smell like bread, butter, and cheese, because that is their daily fare. If you don't believe it, take a sniff--go grab the arm of an American and see what they smell like. You will find what I have just said to be true.



WE ALONE  
SHAPE OUR OWN DESTINIES

Once, during the Ming Dynasty, there lived a person by the name of Yuan-liao Fan (袁了凡). As a young student he was called Yuan-hsueh Hai, and he was very intelligent in his studies.

Yuan-hsueh Hai's father wanted him to study medicine. He said, "If you become a doctor, on the one hand you will be able to make a decent living, and on the other hand you will be able to aid people's lives." So Yuan studied medicine.

One day, during the time when he was still a student, he encountered an old man with a long beard. The moment that long-bearded man set eyes on Yuan-hsueh Hai he said, "You should become a scholar-official. You shouldn't be studying to become a doctor."

Yuan replied, "You say I ought to become an official, but my father wants me to become a doctor."

The old man said, "Well, you're the kind of person who should be a government official." Then the old man cast Yuan's birth chart and calculated the very day, month, and year that Yuan was destined to be awarded a high-ranking position on the Civil Examinations. And then he calculated the very day, month, and year that Yuan was to be appointed to an official post, and then the day, month and year that he was to be selected as governor of a province.

After Yuan's chart was cast, he began to study for the examinations, and as it turned out he was

appointed to a high-ranking position. Time and again, the fate that had been predicted for him by the old man actually came true, and it was not off by a hair's breadth. It was right-on, in every respect. So Yuan came to believe in his preordained fate without reservation, to the point that he did not even bother to study any more. He reasoned, "Since it is preordained that I am to become an official, I will become an official " and he just waited around to assume his post.

One time, while Yuan was awaiting appointment to his post, he traveled to some scenic spots--to the mountains, lakes, and so forth--and one day he arrived at Hsi Hsiao Shan in Nan Hua. There he met Dhyana Master Yun Ku. That Dhyana Master happened to be a lofty member of the Sangha.

The two men took seats facing each other and sat in Dhyana. They sat that way for two days and nights, non-stop. Dhyana Master Yun Ku didn't uncross his legs even once during that whole time, and Yuan-hsueh Hai didn't uncross his legs during that whole time, either. He sat there very upright and proper.

After three days, the Dhyana Master got up, and so did Yuan-hsueh Hai. Dhyana Master Yun Ku said, "Where do you come from? You're really an unusual person. We sat there for three days straight and you didn't produce a single thought. How did you get that kind of skill?"

Yuan-hsueh Hai said, "Some time ago, an astrologer worked out my whole destiny; he predicted the fate of my every move, and so I

no longer have any need to seek. Therefore, as I sat there, I was very peaceful and quiet and had no false thinking."

Upon hearing that, Dhyana Master Yun Ku said, "Oh, I thought you were a really extraordinary person, but now I see that basically you're just an ordinary fellow."

When Yuan-hsueh Hai heard that he said, "Before, you said I was special. So why are you now saying that I'm just an ordinary person?"

Dhyana Master Yun Ku said, "When we sat for three days, you didn't produce a single thought, and so I thought that you were extraordinary. But as it turns out, you're just tied up by your fate, resigned to your destiny. You're just like dead cinders, without any use at all."

And Yuan-hsueh Hai said, "Oh, do you mean to say that it's really possible to change one's fate? Is it possible to escape one's destiny?"

Dhyana Master Yun Ku said, "Well, you're an educated person. You must have studied the *I CHING* (*The Book of Changes*). In that book it says that good people will definitely prosper while evil people will definitely encounter calamities and misfortune. It also says that one should seek what is auspicious and avoid what is inauspicious. So if it's impossible to change one's fate, why would the *I CHING* teach people ways to remold their lives?"

Thereupon, Yuan-hsueh Hai understood. He realized that a superior person has the power to create his or her own destiny. He vowed to do good deeds from that time onward, and as soon as he started doing good things, his destiny as

predicted by the astrologer was altered. For example, he was told that it was his destiny not to have any children, but after he started practicing good deeds he had two sons. When things like that began to happen, he stepped up his practice of doing good deeds even more. And, although it had been predicted that when he reached the age of 54 his life would come to an end in the middle of the night, since he had amassed so much virtue, he actually lived to be over 80 years of age! He broke through the chains of his "destiny".

This has been a true story of how Yuan-hsueh Hai managed to transform his state. The details of this story are recorded in a book written by Yuan, called *THE FOUR EXHORTATIONS OF LIAO FAN* (了凡四訓). From this account we can see that our fates and the length of our lives are flexible. It's definitely not fixed in any particular way. Nothing is preordained. But, if we want to alter our destinies, first we have to change our ways of thinking.

If you change your way of thinking, then your fate will change along with it. But when you change your way of thinking you should change it for the better; don't change it for the worse. That means you should perform all kinds of acts of merit and virtue. As you begin to establish merit and virtue by doing good, your fate will ascend. But if you create all kinds of offenses, your soul will fall. So, whatever you decide to do, it's all up to you.

When cultivating the Way, you have to put all of your spirit and energy into working hard and use your true mind. You can't get off by just putting up a front; you must be honest in every single respect. And you shouldn't have harmful thoughts. You should have only thoughts of wanting to benefit others. In practicing the Bodhisattva Way, you want to cross yourself over, and you also want to cross over others. You become enlightened yourself and also help to enlighten others. You benefit yourself while benefiting others.

Cultivate the Bodhisattva practices in order to adorn the wisdom light of your own Dharma-body, and then your merit and virtue will be amply fulfilled.



*Dharma Protector Wei To Bodhisattva*

*Verse of Transference*

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,  
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,  
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,  
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.

May those who see and hear of this.  
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi,  
And when this retribution body is over,  
Be born together in ultimate bliss.



