

# 人爲什麼應該素食

## WHY SHOULD MAN BE A VEGETARIAN?

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Through the merits of circulating this publication,

“I aspire that may all beings be always at ease and happy; free from sufferings and illness; may none of the evil dharmas practised succeed; may all the wholesome actions practised be quickly accomplished; may all the gates to the evil courses be closed; and may the right way to the human, the divine and the Nirvana be opened and shown.”

-----Adopted from the chapter  
of the Practices and Vows  
of Samantabhadra of the  
AVATAMSAKA SUTRA.



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# WHY SHOULD MAN BE A VEGETARIAN?

## Forward

Formerly when a vegetarian diet is mentioned, one immediately relates it to Buddhism. Owing to a lot of people's mistaken conception, the development of Buddhism has been affected. Many people are concerned about the problems of nutrition of Buddhist disciples on a vegetarian diet. They think that vegetarians are deficient in nutrition and will certainly become poor in health. Although this concept still exists in the minds of some ignorant people, the advancement of science has proved it to be wrong. In countries where science is highly developed, promotion of a vegetarian diet has become the custom. Now let us take the following various reasons, and try to explain why human should be vegetarians.

### 1. Reason Based on Human Instinct.

All living things in the universe, whether an animal or a plant, taking in nutrition to maintain life is instinctive. For the time being, let us set aside plants and talk about animals only, which may generally be divided into two classes: the carnivores and the herbivores. Those that are flesh-eating, whether birds like eagles and hawks, or animals like

tigers, leopards, lions, cats, etc. all have sharp claws for striking, killing, and skinning their prey. Otherwise, they can only eat insects or plants, birds like swallows, pigeons, sparrows, etc. or animals like elephants, rhinoceros, hippopotamuses, giraffes, buffaloes, oxen, horses, mules, camels, sheep, deer, etc. Man's hands are much nimbler than the hooves of horses, deer, etc., but absolutely not suitable for the use of striking, killing and skinning his prey. Man and apes or monkey are alike. Their hands are suitable for peeling fruits. Therefore the species of monkeys are all absolute vegetarian. It can be inferred from the above that man is born positively not a carnivore.

## **2. Reason Based on Digestive System**

The first strategic point of the digestive system of an animal is its teeth. Regarding the teeth of animals, generally the front teeth of carnivores are mostly sharp and there are many jutting-out points on the chewing side of the molars that are fit for breaking bones and rending flesh; the front teeth of those that are vegetable-eating belong to the knife-cutting type, suitable for cutting grasses. The molars are like mortars and are fit for crushing vegetables. Man's teeth belong to the latter, and are not suitable for eating flesh. Moreover, the intestines of those

that are flesh-eating are all particularly short to facilitate excretion. Man, among animals, has the longest intestines from small intestines to large intestines. According to the foregoing, it can be said that man's ability to be flesh-eating is because of his knowledge of eating cooked food. Cooked food has already undergone a process of digestion; otherwise the uncooked flesh cannot basically be swallowed. Even if it is swallowed, there would not be the ability for digestion and excretion. Therefore, it may also be proved that man is born to be a natural vegetarian.

### **3. Reason Based on Nutrition**

The reason that animals want to drink and eat is that they need to take in nutrition. First of all, where does nutrition come from? Scientists have told us that it comes from the earth, sunshine, air, and water. Particularly when the sun shines on the plants, the greatest amount of nutrition is produced owing to photosynthesis. The nutrition's substance in the land is directly absorbed by the plants. Vegetarians take in nutrition directly, whereas carnivores take in nutrition indirectly. People all know that beef is nutritious, but the nutrition of an ox is not derived from eating meat, but from eating plants. People all know that young antlers have a great deal of

hormone, but deer eat grass only, and not young antlers. From the above, it can be deduced that the nutrition for animals themselves all come directly or indirectly from plants.

The following three tables are compiled in accordance with the results of analyses based on scientific methods by nutritionists and are not fabricated by the author. Table I explains what effect which nutrients like protein, fat, sugar, inorganic salt, and water, and their properties or the matter which they contain, have on the human body. Table II explains what effects vitamins A, B1, B2(G) and C, etc. respectively have on physiology? If without them, what illness will result? After reading Table I and Table II, and then reading Table III, one will have a basic knowledge and concept of what effect which substance contained in every kind of food actually has on the human body. Table III explains the nutrients or the vitamins actually contained in every kind of vegetables, melons and fruits or cereals. With such tables, it is possible to arrange and prepare the nutrition required by the human body. Monasteries, families, hospitals, homes or old people, etc. may, according to the season and to the needs of the human body, prepare menus for varying tastes and for arranging the nutrition.

**Table I**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Funtion</b>
Protein	To build up and repair organisms.
Fat	To supply energy; to maintain body temperature; to supply fat to the human body.
Sugar	To supply energy; to maintain body temperature; to supply fat to the human body.
Inorganic Salts	Calcium: To build bones and teeth; to prevent rickets. Phosphorus: To build bones, teeth, and nervous system. Iron: To form the red corpuscles of the blood, and to prevent anemia. Copper: To prevent anemia. Iodine: To help thyroid gland function properly. If iodine is deficient, the thyroid gland is enlarged.
Water	To prevent constipation, adjust body physiological function, form part of the blood and the tissue of the various parts, adjust body temperature, and perform the function of excretion.



**Table II**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Physiological Function</b>	<b>Illness following Deficiency</b>
Vitamin A	To promote growth; to protect epithelial cells; to build resistance to infection.	Night blindness; xerophthalmia; keratomalacia; phrynoderma
Vitamin B <sub>1</sub>	To promote the metabolism of carbohydrates; to stimulate appetite and the functioning of digestion; to adjust the functioning of the nerves.	Multiplex Mononiuiritis; beriberi; loss of appetite.
Vitamin B <sub>2</sub>	To promote growth; to have a role in the oxidation of cells, and in the functioning of vision.	Hindrance to growth; dermatosis, abnormality of vision; angular stomatitis, and cheilitis.
Vitamin C	To keep capillaries from letup; to maintain the normal functioning of cells; to strengthen resistance of body to infection.	Scurvy or blood diseases



### Table III

This table explains:

1. The nutrients are calculated in percentages. In the percentages of the nutrients for “water”, there are traces of other matter.
2. Sign “ $\triangle$ ” indicates that the quantity contained is minimal.
3. Sign “ $\pm$ ” indicates that the quantity contained is sometimes more, sometimes less, and is not constant.
4. Sign “+” indicates that the quantity contained is small.
5. Sign “ $\ddagger$ ” indicates that the quantity contained is slightly larger.
6. Sign “ $\卅$ ” indicates that the quantity contained is large.
7. Sign “ $\ast$ ” indicates that the quantity contained is the largest.
8. Calorie quantity indicates the total amount of calories contained in every 100 grams.

Name	Calorie	Vitamin				Nutrient				
		C	B <sub>2</sub> G	B <sub>1</sub>	A	Water	Inorganic Salt	Sugar	Fat	Protein
Apple	63	卅	+	+	+	84.60	00.30	14.20	00.50	00.40
Pomelo	44	卅			+	88.70	00.30	10.20	0	00.80
Mandarin orange	52	卅		+	+	86.70	00.40	11.90	00.10	00.90
Orange	52	※		△	△	87.45	01.25	11.30	0	0
Peach	29	卅		+	卅	89.83	01.00	08.60	0	00.57
Persimmon	57	+		△	卅	85.34	00.43	13.62	0	00.61
Loquat	29	△				92.40	00.50	06.60	00.10	00.40
Watermelon	20	+				94.86	00.21	04.77	0	00.16
Papaya	115	卅			卅	71.07	01.23	26.84	00.30	00.56
Apricot	49	△			卅	86.90	00.80	11.10	0	01.20
Litchi	61	卅		△	△	85.00	00.40	13.30	00.60	00.70
Pear	63	+		卅		87.10	00.40	11.40	00.50	00.60
Banana	96	卅	卅	+	卅	73.39	01.06	23.05	00.63	01.87
Plum	84					78.40	00.50	20.10	0	01.00
Pineapple	42	卅		+	+	89.70	00.30	09.30	00.30	00.40
Lemon	58	卅		卅	±	88.74	00.86	10.40	0	0
Grape	70	+	△	+	+	81.97	00.48	16.86	0	00.69
Red dates	257	+				34.90	01.20	60.80	00.30	02.80
Pomegranate	88	卅				79.50	00.60	16.80	01.60	01.50
Cherry	77	+	卅	卅	卅	81.10	00.60	16.50	00.80	01.00
Mango	71	卅	卅	卅	+	83.00	00.50	15.00	00.90	00.60
Tomato	28	卅	+	卅	卅	93.87	00.67	04.32	00.19	00.95
Green Plum	32	△		+		92.20	00.90	05.10	00.90	00.90
Water chestnut	87	卅		△		77.00	01.40	20.10	00.10	01.40
Walnut	672			卅	+	09.40	01.50	10.40	63.20	1.550

Name	Calorie	Vitamin				Nutrient				
		C	B <sub>2</sub> G	B <sub>1</sub>	A	Water	Inorganic Salt	Sugar	Fat	Protein
Almond	580			卅	+	14.60	02.40	08.50	49.60	24.90
Hazelnut	586			卅		13.20	03.50	16.50	50.60	16.20
Chestnut	161	+	+	卅	+	60.30	01.05	35.05	00.40	03.20
Sunflower seed	591	△		+	△	12.40	03.80	09.60	51.10	23.10
Pine seed	678			+	+	07.30	02.70	09.80	63.50	16.70
Green sweet melon	16	卅		卅	卅	95.60	00.40	03.50	0	00.50
Longan	317				+	18.00	03.00	73.20	00.20	05.60
Hill haw	89	卅				77.20	00.80	21.10	00.20	00.70
Carambola	21	△				94.77	00.26	04.53	00.09	00.35
Sugar cane	68	△		△	△	82.90	00.30	16.40	00.20	00.20
Plum	79					79.60	00.60	18.90	0	00.90
Loofah gourd	25			卅	卅	93.40	00.50	04.50	00.10	01.50
Bitter gourd	16	卅		卅	+	95.50	00.50	03.20	0	00.80
Wax gourd Vegetable marrow	19			+		97.77	00.23	01.72	00.02	00.26
Pumpkin	28			卅	卅	93.10	00.13	06.08	00.13	00.65
Old pumpkin	30			卅	卅	92.60	00.50	06.00	00.40	00.50
West calabash	5	+		+	卅	98.50	00.30	00.90	0	00.30
Cucumber	12	卅		+	±	96.66	00.47	01.96	00.06	00.85
Gourd	15	+		卅		95.90	00.40	02.80	00.10	00.80
Eggplant	17	+		+	+	94.39	00.50	03.94	00.09	01.08
Rape turnip	18	卅	+	+	+	95.28	00.78	02.30	0	01.62
Radish	45	卅		卅	△	88.20	00.80	09.70	00.10	01.20
Turnip	18	+	+	+	+	95.08	00.49	03.70	0	00.73
Red amaranth	23	卅			卅	93.10	01.60	03.20	00.30	01.80
Green amaranth	22	※		卅	※	93.30	01.60	03.00	03.00	01.80

Name	Calorie	Vitamin				Nutrient				
		C	B <sub>2</sub> G	B <sub>1</sub>	A	Water	Inorganic Salt	Sugar	Fat	Protein
Lettuce	16	卅	卅	卅	卅	95.40	00.90	02.20	00.30	01.20
Garland Chrysanthemum	22	卅		卅	+	94.10	01.00	02.60	00.40	01.90
Celery	14	±		卅	+	95.55	00.57	02.47	00.14	01.20
Parsely	38	卅				89.30	01.50	06.90	00.30	02.00
Brassica cernua	28			△		80.70	12.50	04.10	00.10	02.60
Spinach	18	卅	卅	卅	卅	94.48	01.30	01.65	00.27	02.30
Mustard Plant	20	※		卅	±	93.85	01.45	03.20	00.50	01.00
Chinese young cabbage	13		卅	卅	+	95.70	01.30	01.60	00.20	01.20
Chinese young white cabbage	14	卅	+	卅	卅	95.60	01.00	01.90	00.10	01.40
Rape	17		卅	卅	+	95.00	01.00	02.50	00.10	01.40
Cabbage	32	卅	卅	卅	卅	91.55	00.96	04.98	00.28	02.23
Tientsin cabbage	6	+				98.15	01.26	0	0	00.59
Cauliflower	11	卅	卅	+	+	94.98	00.72	02.80	0	01.50
Tientsin white cabbage	15	卅		卅	+	95.88	00.60	02.43	00.07	01.02
Red capsicum	86	+		卅	卅	96.55	00.30	02.00	00.15	01.00
Persimmon chilli	40	※			卅	89.70	00.90	07.20	00.50	01.70
Lentil with pod	32	+		卅	卅	91.60	00.70	05.30	00.20	02.20
White cowpea pod	35	卅	+	卅	卅	91.50	00.50	04.90	00.50	02.60
Dried Lily flower	48			+	卅	87.60	00.90	08.90	00.40	02.20
Shepherd's-purse	38	卅		卅	卅	89.50	01.40	04.70	00.30	04.10
Soya bean sprouts	21	卅		卅		74.15	01.15	03.20	00.70	20.80
Green bean sprouts	29	卅		卅	+	92.40	00.40	03.90	00.10	03.20
Carrots	38	卅	卅	卅	卅	88.44	01.30	9.06	00.29	01.18
Ginger sprouts	21	+				94.00	01.40	03.10	00.60	00.90
Old ginger	38	+			+	89.90	01.30	06.90	00.60	01.30

Name	Calorie	Vitamin				Nutrient				
		C	B <sub>2</sub> G	B <sub>1</sub>	A	Water	Inorganic Salt	Sugar	Fat	Protein
Bamboo shoot	18	+	△	+		92.63	00.95	03.88	00.16	02.38
Lotus roots	51	卅				86.81	01.13	10.36	0	01.70
Fresh broad bean	97	+		+	+	75.77	01.23	13.78	00.46	08.76
Yellow soybean	440	+	+	卅	+	13.30	05.00	21.00	20.20	40.50
Fresh soybean	168	+	+	卅	+	66.14	01.82	09.74	07.10	15.20
Garden pea	308	卅	+	卅	卅	22.32	02.49	51.03	00.56	23.60
Water caltrop	213	+				46.30	01.40	46.60	00.70	05.00
Peanut	545		卅	卅	+	08.94	02.49	15.56	44.49	28.52
Soybean	388			卅	+	10.94	04.64	27.69	18.00	38.70
花臉豆	321					17.10	03.30	58.40	00.50	20.70
Red bean	302			卅		21.44	03.54	51.67	00.38	22.97
Black bean	409	△		卅	卅	15.27	04.25	21.97	18.26	40.25
Green bean	331			卅	+	15.00	03.30	58.80	00.80	22.10
Lentil	175	+		卅	+	60.32	01.25	11.00	08.17	19.26
Old maize	374	△	±	+	△	10.30	01.80	74.90	04.40	08.60
Maize	359	△		卅	卅	15.97	01.47	67.89	05.09	09.58
Millet	358	△	+	卅	+	14.99	02.55	65.34	05.55	11.57
Kaoliang	340	△		卅	+	19.38	00.11	66.39	03.62	10.50
Barley	308	△		卅	+	14.50	10.62	72.56	01.70	09.62
Wheat	347			+	卅	14.13	00.65	74.82	01.10	09.30
Spiked millet	342		+	卅	+	17.15	01.25	70.52	03.02	08.16
Glutinous rice	326					15.83	01.27	75.10	01.70	06.10
White polished rice	358		△	△	△	12.43	03.66	76.16	00.46	07.29
Rice bran	393		+	卅	+	17.03	09.85	41.37	17.93	13.82
Kelp	227	+				23.08	21.24	47.70	00.87	07.11



Name	Calorie	Vitamin				Nutrient				
		C	B <sub>2</sub> G	B <sub>1</sub>	A	Water	Inorganic Salt	Sugar	Fat	Protein
Mushroom	289			△		27.39	03.14	53.05	02.23	14.19
Fungus	312	△		卅	±	19.00	59.20	05.40	02.00	14.40
Fungus	301	△		△	△	19.20	05.70	64.50	00.20	10.40
Laver	200			卅	卅	18.86	31.35	37.81	00.37	11.61
Yam	90			+		77.21	01.00	19.86	00.06	01.87
Taro	77	+		+	±	80.20	00.80	16.70	00.10	02.20
Potato	82	卅	+	卅	+	78.67	01.00	19.22	00.10	01.01
Sweet potato	119	+		+	卅	68.76	00.93	28.77	00.19	01.35
Dried shredded turnip	272	△		△		23.40	08.70	61.30	0	06.60
Salted dried turnip	107			△		53.85	20.85	21.77	00.69	02.84
Soy turnip	65	+				75.30	09.32	12.61	00.29	02.48
Flour	346			+	?	16.13	00.90	69.87	01.44	11.66
Seasoning powder	613					13.18	06.20	06.62	54.30	19.70
Bean curd	58			卅	+	90.81	00.64	01.50	00.95	06.55
Dried bean curd	171	△				68.50	01.20	02.80	09.00	18.50
Soy bean	173					47.00	22.50	01.50	10.10	18.90
Paste of pungent condiment	39				卅	84.50	06.50	08.00	00.50	00.50
Granulated sugar	363					36.89	00.63	42.86	00.42	19.20
Turnip juice	19	※				94.60	00.79	03.56	00.05	01.00
Pickled cucumber	58	△				76.40	09.30	10.40	00.10	03.80
Soybean sauce	60					70.40	14.60	08.10	0	06.90
Bread	275	△		+	△	03.05	01.33	53.64	01.18	10.80
Cooked rice	147	△	△	△	△	64.31	00.17	32.31	00.05	03.16
Soybean milk	65	+	+	卅	+	77.93	00.76	03.00	04.81	13.50

In the past, many people thought that rice contained starch only, but from the above table, it can be seen that the protein contained in rice is as much as 7% plus. Vitamins, proteins, fats, and inorganic salts in rice are mostly in the bran. Thus unpolished rice is more nutritious than polished rice. If beri-beri is found, it is known to be the result of lack of vitamin B1. If a decoction of rice bran is made and taken, that disease will recover.

The quantities of vitamins contained in some vegetables are surprisingly large. For example, spinach, cabbage, mustard plant, Chinese young white cabbage, cowpea pod, carrot, etc. are all outstanding items of such vegetables.

Soybeans and black beans in the bean family contain up to 40% protein and up to 20% fat — such large amounts are startling.

Fruits such as mangoes, tomatoes, and bananas, all contain different quantities of vitamins, and moreover, a good deal of them — a fact of rarity.

In the past, people misunderstood that potatoes contain only starch and sugar without knowing that they actually contain a lot of vitamins.

Some foods like preserved soy beans, dried bean curd, granulated sugar, and seasoning powder do not have any vitamins, but they all contain up to 19% protein, and are therefore also very valuable.

Sometimes, the nutrients and vitamins contained in certain vegetables, which have been cooked thoroughly, or pickled, or made into paste, have undergone great changes. Such changes, however, do not necessarily decrease the nutrients and vitamins contained, but on the contrary, occasionally increase them.

Soybean milk has more protein than milk has, and has all kinds of vitamins. Thus, soybean milk is highly nutritious. It can therefore be inferred that man should be a vegetarian as a matter of course. A further illustration is that if a man has been on a vegetarian diet for a long period, not only will he not think of eating meat thereafter, but also find the smell of meat offensive and upsetting to his stomach, even nauseous. On the other hand, if for a long time, a man eats meat without fruit and vegetables, not only will he desire to eat them, but will also find the imbalance in his body causing a lot of illness and disharmony. From this, it is sufficient to prove that man is absolutely not a natural meat-eater.

#### **4. Reason Based on Hygiene**

Basically, nutrition is hygiene. For the sake of explaining them separately, under “Reason based on Nutrition”, the nutrition problem of a vegetarian diet is discussed exclusively without touching on the



adverse effect of meat-eating. Here, let us specially talk about the problem of how meat-eating goes against hygiene.

Meat-eating causes tiredness very easily, and contributes to premature senility — tiredness and premature senility being two types of morbidity. The human body is formed by millions of cells, and every cell has the function of absorbing nutrition and oxygen, and discharging waste matter. If such function meets with obstacles, the cells will degenerate, and at the same time, various organs formed by the cells will follow accordingly and degenerate also. There is no doubt that meat is indeed the culprit of being an obstacle to the function of excretion — when animals are alive, they will naturally discharge waste matter from their system, but when being slaughtered, they particularly produce, because of extreme fear, grief, and anger, large quantities of poisonous waste matter yet to be excreted; at that time, all their functions immediately stop, resulting in the storage of large quantities of poisonous waste matter in the body, and when man eats their meat, it is equivalent to adding their waste matter automatically into the eater's own body. Uric acid is precisely the most evident waste matter of meat. Every pound of beefsteak contains fourteen grams of uric acid. As cells are surrounded by waste

matter, their function of metabolism will degenerate and weaken. The result causes man to feel tired and to have the morbidity of premature senility. Dr. Alexis Carrell, Nobel Caureate in 1912, had already recognized that it was only necessary to examine the functions of cells in supplying nutrition and excreting waste matter to understand clearly whether the cells and various organs in the system had become senile. So he immersed a piece of chicken liver in a nutritious liquid which was able to provide nutrition and to provide for the discharge of waste matter. Dr. Carrell's purpose of making this experiment was to lengthen somewhat the period of viability of the chicken liver. He got great success. The said chicken liver was preserved without the slightest decay from 1913 up to 1947, totalling thirty-four years. Dr. Carrell was dead then. The chicken liver was subsequently discarded by someone into the drain, and thus decayed. Actually if it was not discarded, its viability could have been prolonged. This sufficiently explains that the length of life is wholly dependent upon how cells function. It further explains that if the function of metabolism of human cells does not meet with obstacles, human life can certainly be extended by an unknown period. On the other hand, if the liquid in the cells is often filled with waste matter, life will come to an end at any time.

Researches carried out by Western scholars showed that ten generations before the Deluge, the average life of mankind was nine hundred and twelve years of age; after the Deluge, man began to eat meat and ten generations after, the average life of mankind was only three hundred and seventeen years of age.

It is more terrifying to think of the various germs brought to meat-eaters from the carcasses of animals, particularly the cause of cancers that often cannot be easily found out by examination. When man eats them, it is tantamount to transferring cancer cells from animals to his own system.

Generally, there is a mistaken idea that engaging in work that causes hardship and requires endurance, one must have large quantities of meat for replenishment of nutrition. As a matter of fact, such a view — thinking that the consumption of physical strength necessitates meat for replenishment — is but an illusion. Man cannot compare with cattle and horses with regard to physical strength and endurance, but they, the cattle and horses, require only plants for replenishment of energy. Murray Rose, once an Olympic swimming gold medalist, was a vegetarian. According to the comments of the sporting world, “Mr. Rose not only swam with terrific speed, but his stamina was also especially strong. In particular, at the last moment of every

competitive race, his speed was doubled.” From this, one may conclude that the theory that only meat-eaters have stamina cannot be established.

In recent generations, the mortality from heart disease has been particularly high. Although the factors causing heart disease are many, the cause from too much animal fat has been in the majority. Animal fat produces cholesterol which can harden blood vessels, cause steno-cardiac, and have other adverse effects. Such cases are particularly serious among old people.

The hygienic reasons stated in the above prove that man is not suited to meat-eating, particularly the aged, as the functions of their system have degenerated and they are particularly vulnerable.

## **5. Reason Based on Mercy**

Buddhism is based on mercy, which is produced from prajna (wisdom). It is because when one is realising the truth of causal conditions, cause and effect transmigration, all sentient beings of the same level, with the whole universe of the same reality, so he come to produce the great compassion and great pity without discrimination in the absolute phase. Thus originated the conduct to avoid killing. To practise vegetarianism is a positive conduct to abstain from killing. All living beings are equal. There is no

difference between all living beings and myself. I do not want to be killed and slaughtered. So all living beings do not want to be killed and slaughtered either. Just try to think of the terror, the suffering, and the pathetic sound of the screams from living beings while being killed. Suppose my dear ones and I were in their place, could I still consider eating their meat? The lives of all living beings are the same, their mentalities of being afraid of death and striving to survive are also the same, and their feelings of pain are also the same. If man would put himself in the place of all living beings, he would naturally not bear to kill them, how much more so to eat their meat? When I started learning Buddhism, I did not practise vegetarianism. At that time, at about four o'clock every morning, I had the habit of sitting on the bed and reciting The Buddha's name. Just then, not far from my living quarters, the noise from slaughtering pigs began and can be heard. Because of the quiet of the early morning, the screams of pigs during the time from being tied, to the bleeding after having been knifed, and to the weakening of the pigs' breath, all distinctly reached my ears. The grief of those helpless screams pierced every cell of mine. During the first few days, they were still pigs' screams. Gradually there were changes in my mind, and pigs' screams became men's wails. Thenceforth,



when meat entered my mouth, I could not bear to chew it, and least of all would I want to swallow it. After some time, even when I saw the carcasses of animals on the plates, they were transformed into human bodies in my mind. Not only dared I not eat them, I could not bear to see them also. This started my practising vegetarianism. Certainly I met many people who ridiculed, scolded, and laughed at me. There were people who were also concerned about me and persuaded me, but I had decided to be a vegetarian and no change could be made. There are people who think that to practise vegetarianism adversely affects health. It is not necessary to repeat here the explanations made therefore in the foregoing. The most deplorable, silly argument is that Nature nurtures the existence of all living creatures, which are precisely meant for man to eat, and if man does not eat them, it is against the will of Heaven. Do they know that Nature nurtures many kinds of animals, which can eat man, and if man does not offer himself for them to eat, whether this also is against the will of Heaven?

## **6. Reason Based on Causality and Samsara**

The law of causality (cause and effect) is the basic rule of Buddhism. Where there is cause, there must be effect. As a man sows, so shall he reap, and this is

immutable. Occasionally there is an exception and this change is also based on the strength of conditions. Actually, condition is also cause. According to this, it follows that if the cause for killing has been laid; there must be retribution for killing. Eating the flesh of others, one must repay flesh to them. There is a saying: eat what weighs half a catty; repay the same that weighs eight taels. There is individual retribution for individual cause; there is common retribution for collective cause. Recent armaments are sharp, furious, and are able to kill countless people at one stroke. This is invariably common retribution for collective cause of killing. Other examples like natural disasters and pestilences are all facts of common retribution. Take Hong Kong for instance, the slaughter of birds, beasts, aquatic animals and fishes is countless, but their grievances and animosities which are as high as the sky are undetectable. One poem of our old master goes as follows: "For the past hundreds and thousands of years, there in the broth of the bowls have been grievances as deep as the sea, and resentment difficult to atone for. If one wishes to know the cause of mundane war disasters, one has only to listen to the mid-night sounds from the abbatoir."

From time immemorial, after countless transmigration of living beings, one does not know one's parents and relatives of past lives who are

among the living now. Who knows that the ones, of whose bellies you are ripping open with a knife, and of whose bones you are cracking to get the marrow, are precisely your own parents, brothers, wives, or children of past lives? Now without knowing who they are, you cook and eat them. Many years ago, there was an Arhat, who in his Buddhist practice, traveled on foot, and reached a village, where there was a wedding party. The Arhat went forward to solicit alms. Upon his entering the main gate, he cast a look with his blessed eye. He could not help but laugh loudly. Relatives and other well-wishers were all drawn by his sudden loud laugh. They hastily and disorderly put down their wine cups and chopsticks on the table, and went to ask him why he had laughed. The Arhat said, "Too chaotic; Too chaotic. This is rarely seen." He then uttered four sentences: "This event has been rare from ancient times to the present. A grandson is marrying his grandmother. Dogs and sheep are sitting at the table. The maternal grandmother is being cooked in the pot." It happened that the bride that day was none other than the grandmother of the bridegroom in his previous life. Many among the guests were dogs and sheep raised by the bridegroom's family in his previous life. The meat being cooked in the pot in the kitchen was precisely the maternal grandmother



of the bridegroom in his previous life. They happened to be together that day, and were spotted by the Arhat. Suppose a man eats meat all his life, then he could have eaten his relatives of past lives not less than hundreds and thousands of times, only he himself, blinded by his foolishness and ignorance, has been unable to recognize this.

Buddhist disciples, basing on the principle that all living beings are equal, know that these living beings all have the nature of Buddha, and that they all can be Buddhas in the future. In other words, all living beings at present are future Buddhas. Further, according to the principle of transmigration, it is inferred that all living beings at present could all have been my relatives in past lives, only I myself, bothered and bewildered persistently by my foolishness and ignorance, have been unable to recognize this. So Buddha told us: "All men are my fathers. All women are my mothers." The word "all" includes all living beings without doubting that only the male is then the father, and that only the female is then the mother. As a matter of fact, men and women all come as a result of retribution. Buddha's above saying was for expediency to make us mindful and fearful. According to this, it follows that the living beings killed and eaten to-day were past parents and future Buddhas. If one fully understands

this, would not one be terrified?

## **7. Meaning of Observing disciplines by Buddhist Disciples**

As a matter of fact, all Buddhist disciples should abstain from killing, practise vegetarianism, and cultivate a spirit of great mercy. They should look upon all living beings in equality. After such practice has been adopted for a long time, it is very natural when a piece of meat is in the mouth, it is like eating the flesh of one's son. One can then hardly swallow it. Although Buddhism has the theory of "Three types of meat in purity" it was only a temporary measure when Buddha had taken into consideration the difficulty of abolishing meat eating all at once in those social environments and people's habits at that time, so Buddha allowed the "Three types of meat in purity" eating for the prevention of more killing behaviour. Whereas in the Mahayana Buddhism, such as the Sutras of Brahmajala, Surangama, Lankavatara and Nirvana, the prohibition against eating all living beings is expressly specified.

Citing "Mahayana Lankavatara Sutra" as an Evidence:

"Dar Wei! all kinds of meat has Infinite Pratyeka Bodhisattvas in them. You should be compassionate and feel pity, so you should not eat them. Now I am

explaining to you a little. Dar Wei! all living beings have come into existence without a beginning because of the endless chain of birth and death transmigration. In this process, they have been one's parents, children, relatives, friends, dear ones, and attendants, and in the changing life from death to birth, they have become birds or animals. How could man take any among them and eat it? Dar Wei! A Mahabodhisattva views all living beings the same as himself and thinks all meat coming from all life. Why does man eat it? Dar Wei! even those demons (Raksas) who devour men, on hearing this saying of mine, stop eating meat. Why should not those who desire to learn the Buddhist doctrines? Dar Wei! A Mahabodhisattva, at a place where there was life, looked at all living beings and found that they were all his relatives. With kind thought, he even considered them his children. Thus, all kinds of meat should not be eaten. Dar Wei! Meat-sellers in shops of the market at a thoroughfare sell dog meat, horse meat, beef, man's flesh, etc. for profit. How can such dirty things be eaten?

“Dar Wei, all kinds of meat are formed by spermatozoa, blood, and dirt. How can those who seek to be clean and pure, and endeavour to be far away from sins and evil say that meat may be eaten? Dar Wei! all living beings are terrified when they see meat-

eaters. How can those who wish to cultivate a kind heart eat meat? Dar Wei! for example, on seeing wicked people like hunters, Candala, those who catch fishes and net birds, etc., dogs are frightened and bark, and animals run away. Those living beings that fly in the air or living in the water all think in this way: The bearing of this man is like a man-devouring demon (Raksa). Now that he has come, he will certainly kill me. In order to protect life, they all run away to avoid him. Their attitude towards meat-eating people is also the same. Therefore, Bodhisattvas for the sake of practising kind deeds should not eat meat. Dar Wei! the bodies of meat-eaters stink, their wicked names spread, and virtuous men, sages, and good people will not get on closely with them. So Bodhisattvas should not eat meat. Dar Wei! Devas, genii, all abandon blood and meat, and sages also do not eat blood and meat. Therefore Bodhisattvas should not eat meat. Dar Wei! with kindness and commiseration, Bodhisattvas maintain the faith of all living beings, and causes Buddhist doctrines not to be jeered at and slandered. So Bodhisattvas should not eat meat. Dar Wei! if my disciples eat meat, this makes people entertain jeering and slanderous thoughts and say this: how can Sramana who practise Buddhist rules deviate from them, break them by abandoning what devas and genii eat, and act like vicious animals eating meat to

the full, wandering in the world, and causing all living beings to be terrified which would destroy the pure practice and lose the way of Sramana? It is inferred therefore that they have not got rid of their bad conduct in the manner as taught in the Buddhist doctrines. With kindness and commiseration, Bodhisattvas for the sake of protecting all living beings, have such a belief as they should not eat meat.

“Dar Wei! if man’s flesh is burnt, the smell stinks, just like burning the flesh of other animals. Why is some meat eaten and some not? So all those who wish to be clean and pure, and to be far away from sins and evil should not eat meat. Dar Wei! those virtuous men and women, who believe in causality and do good deeds, practise Buddhist rules quietly among graves, under trees, or in monasteries or nunneries. They either strengthen their kind heart, or practise esoteric mantra, or seek release from all bondage, or hasten to follow Mahayana Buddhism. Because of meat-eating, so there are all the obstacles that prevent them from becoming a Buddha. Therefore a Bodhisattva, wishing to benefit himself as well as others, should not eat meat. Dar Wei! those meat-eaters, on seeing the shape and colour of meat, is already greedy for its taste. The Bodhisattva’s kindness makes him think that all living beings are the body of himself. How could he,



on seeing meat, consider eating it? So a Bodhisattva should not eat meat.

(Omission here)

Dar Wei! I often say: Regard the meat which one eats as that of one's son. Even when eating other flesh too. How could people say that I let my disciples eat meat? Dar Wei! meat is not exquisite. It is not clean and pure. It produces sins, and destroys good deeds and virtues. It is discarded by devas, genii and sages. How could people say that I let my disciples eat meat? If anyone says that I let my disciples eat meat, this man has libelled me. Dar Wei! those who eat pure, fine food should know that it is non-glutinous rice, maize, barley, wheat, bean, ghrta, stone honey, etc. These have been approved by all Buddhas and commended by me. In our seed nature, those men and women, who believe in causality and do good deeds, have pure faith in their heart, and have long ago planted the root of virtue in them. They have no greed and, least of all, clinging greed for life and wealth. They are kind and sympathetic to all as if living beings were themselves. The above-mentioned food should be taken by such men and women, and is not liked by the wicked who practise the nature of tigers and wolves.

(Omission here)

“Dar Wei! slaughter is done mostly for man's

food. If man does not eat those food, there would be no need to kill. Therefore, eating meat commits the same crime as killing does.”

However, there are people who put forward an objection. They think that Buddha has allowed the eating three types of meat in purity, but Buddha has said that there should not be two kinds. These people even say, by way of disparagement, that Mahayana Buddhism is not the teaching of Buddha. As a matter of fact, there is no room for such an argument. Every Buddhist knows, Buddha's teachings are given to suit different conditions and circumstances of each sentient being to attain enlightenment. Mahayana sutras were the last teachings of Buddha and the Nirvana Sutra is particularly a general summary of all Buddhist teachings. Although there are expediency and reality in these teachings, the fundamental principles are always never in conflict. With regard to refraining from eating the meat of all living beings and eating the three types of meat in purity, even though there is a difference between eating and not eating, the purpose of stop killing is just the same objective. To refrain from killing is, moreover, basically great abstinence in the Buddhist doctrines. Further, not to eat meat is a positive action of refraining from killing. Thus, it is evident that to eat the three types

of meat in purity is at the initial stage in the process of expedient teaching, while not to eat meat is the ultimate goal of practising the great deliverance of Buddhism from sufferings and afflictions, which then conforms to Buddha's idea. Today in Buddhism, there are still meat-eaters. We may regard them as learners at the initial stage. As to those who both kill and eat the meat, they simply cannot be considered true Buddhists.

## **Conclusion**

Lastly, two questions are to be explained as a conclusion.

(1) Question: According to Mahayana Buddhist doctrine, all living beings have a nature like that of Buddha, and should include plants; otherwise how could there be a case of "Even the stones nodded their heads?" Animals can feel pain and one can hear them screaming, whereas one cannot know the pain of the plant. Although one cannot know its pain, it is in pain just the same. Why does the prohibition against eating the meat of all living beings not include plants?

Answer: this question can be explained in two parts: (a) From the viewpoint of reason, as all living beings and ourselves are of the same origin, we should not destroy them, and so there is an example



of Bodhisattva's not treading grass. However, from the viewpoint of fact, although plants have the functions of existence, they do not have consciousness of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, mind, and alaya. If they have no consciousness, it means that they have no emotion. If they have no emotion, it means that they do not produce virtuous and evil seeds. Thus while cutting plants or vegetables, it would not cause the evil seed to be kept in human's alaya consciousness, and so it is not against a compassionate and merciful heart, and there is, no fall into evil paths as retribution either.

(b) To learn Buddhism is to practise Buddhist ways. To practise Buddhist ways, one must do good deeds in order to obtain bliss, and must cultivate oneself in order to attain wisdom. If one does not eat both animals and vegetables, death will result thereby prematurely ending one's life before becoming a Buddha. This neither benefits oneself nor others, and is against the original idea of Buddha. Eating vegetables does no damage to being compassionate and merciful, and furthermore, is a nourishment to those who hope to be Buddhas.

(2) Question: According to Buddhist doctrines, all appearances are originally unreal, and they are ultimately empty. Why should one be particularly concerned about eating and not eating?

Answer: This question can also be answered in two parts: reason and fact. From the viewpoint of reason, the Dharma realm of one reality is profoundly quiet. There are no virtue and no evil; no impurity and no purity. With regard to killing and not killing, and eating and not eating, there is none at all in that domain. However, after one has attained Buddhahood one can have such perception. From the viewpoint of fact, ordinary people like us are bound by our ignorance and defilements. To get rid of them, it necessitates practise for a long period, and the method thereof is invariably in two ways: to do good deeds in order to obtain bliss, and to cultivate oneself in order to attain wisdom. If either is abandoned, one cannot reach the Buddha's domain. While having not reached that domain, one absurdly picks up what others have said and takes it as one's own idea, which not only gives no benefit, but on the contrary engenders harm. This is strictly taboo to those who are practising Buddhism.

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We request that it be treated with respect.

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Thanks for your co-operation.

Namo Amitabha!



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