

Why Vegetarian Diet?

Hi everyone, this is Nancy. Today is Mar. 12th, 2022. How are you doing? If you search internet, you will probably find over one hundred reasons why you should take vegetarian diet. Environmental protection, personal health and compassion to animals are probably the main reasons because we know that meat production simply needs lots of resources; meat eating brings many health issues and animal husbandry involves mistreating of animals. The recent research shows that about 5% American are vegetarian and surprisingly about 30-40% of American are actively trying to reduce meat consumption in their diet. Today, I would like to share with you my view of vegetarian diet.

As I mentioned in my early videos, my switch to Buddhist diet which I will talk again later was quite easy. That was when I heard the Buddha's words that all the sentient beings we meet were once our parents or brothers and sisters. I understood these words and made a quick switch. There was no problem for me at all. From a Buddhist point of view, why should everyone take vegetarian diet? I would like to share three reasons with you here.

First of all, vegetarian diet is a sustainable way to live through our lives. Life is a continuous flowing river. Birth and death never stop this flowing, but there are ups and downs which are due to karma. Heavy karma or evil karma drags us down to lower realms like animal realm or ghost realm or hell realm and light karma or good karma lifts us up to higher realms like heaven. Vegetarian diet is the diet to purify ourselves and lift us up and meat diet contaminates us and weighs us down. I still remember there was a period of time when I had beef almost every morning and I became very fussy those days. It was obvious.

Secondly, vegetarian diet is imperative for the earth to healthily evolve forward. Meat eating is the root cause of many severe problems. For example, the root cause of war is meat eating. In Buddhism, it's said that there are four kinds of killing, "people killing people", "people killing animals", "animals killing people" and "animals killing animals". Where there is killing, there was a cause for this killing, and where there is killing, there will be being killed. As the verse goes, "In the bowls of our meal, ocean deep hatred is hard to ease; to know the reason of wars, just listen to the scream behind the butcher's door."

For the third reason, I would like to share a well-known story with you.

During the period of Emperor Liang when Buddhism was popular, people often invited monks to their home when they had weddings or funerals. There was a monk whose name was Zhigong. He had supernatural power and he could see cause and effect behind things. Once, he was invited to a wedding to recite sutras for blessing. When he entered the door, he uttered some strange words. He said, "Strange, strange, everything is strange. The grandson is marrying his grandmother; cows and sheep are sitting in the bed; the six kinds of relatives are being boiled in the pot; the daughter is eating her mother, and the son is hitting the drum made of his father's skin. All the people come to celebrate, and for me, it's all suffering."

People didn't understand his words and asked him to explain. The monk explained them the transmigration of these people.

When the grandmother in this family died, she could not put down her grandson because she loved him so much. After she entered into the underworld. The King of the underworld said to her, "Since you love your grandson so much, you will be reincarnated and become his wife in your next life. So you will take care of him." This is the reason why the grandson was marrying his grandmother.

The owner of the family was a butcher and he killed lots of cows and sheep. Some of these cows and sheep were reborn as humans and become this man's relatives. These relatives were the guests sitting in the bed and having the meals in the wedding.

One lady was enjoying eating a pig foot and this pig was reincarnation of her own mother. The son was beating a drum and the drum was made of donkey's skin and that donkey was reincarnation of his father.

Seeing through all the relationships of these people, the monk was very sad.

The Buddha said, "All the sentient beings we meet are once our relatives." Once, on the road, the Buddha and his disciples saw a pile of bones, and the Buddha bowed to these bones. Ananda asked the Buddha why. The Buddha said, "All these could be our ancestors."

Amitabha! This is today's dharma share. See through all the forms. All the sentient beings share the same Buddha nature, feelings, emotions, and all are connected. Thank you everyone for being here. I will see you next time. Bye.