

The Lamp of Scriptures and Reasoning



*A Tibetan Buddhist Perspective on the
Faults of Eating Meat*

Lama Phurbu Tashi Rinpoche

The Lamp of Scriptures and Reasoning of the Sage, the Buddha

*Some discussion encouraging the abandonment of
taking slain flesh as food for those desiring excellence.*

Lama Phurbu Tashi Rinpoche

*Forewords by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama &
His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa*



Annapolis, MD

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THE DALAI LAMA

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Foreword by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Engaging in acts of virtue, Minyak Phurbu Tashi has compiled the book called *The Lamp of Reasoning and Scriptures of the Sage, the Buddha: Some encouraging the abandonment taking slain flesh as food* discussion for those desiring excellence. In doing so Phurbu Tashi has strongly encouraged many beings who enjoy meat to completely abandon it or at least to reduce consumption thus offering protection of life and shelter from fear to many living creatures. Therefore, I rejoice, offer praise and make the aspiration that this encourages virtue and the arising of vast benefit.

The Dalai Lama

August 7, 2004

Foreword by His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa

It is excellent that Phurbu Tashi of Rumtek Shedra has composed this book of advice regarding the faults of eating meat and the means to abandon it. Generally, those of us who follow the doctrine of non-violence' of the compassionate teacher, the Buddha, and in particular many Kagyu lamas of the past have not partaken of meat. As several of the great monasteries, numerous monks and other students have adhered to the tradition of vegetarianism as taught according to the life stories, beyond uttering mere empty words, may we give rise to affection for our old mother sentient beings from the depths of our hearts.

Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje

Buddhist year 2458

July 31, 2004

One

Homage and Expression of Intention

*Striving solely to discover the means of happiness
for all beings,
You benefit others by showing that the path to
enlightenment is
the mind that benefits others.
Great compassionate one who especially loves
those tormented beings,
I bow to the feet of the lama with whom all
connections are meaningful.*

*With loving-kindness your eyes gaze upon beings,
By compassionate means you appear as a great
spiritual friend,
Lord of compassion who shows the peaceful path of
non-violence
To Chenrezig, the holder of the lotus, I respectfully
prostrate.*

*In order that the glorious lama's life be long and
To liberate impoverished beings from the
conflicting emotions,
Thinking that this is the intention of the lama
I offer some discussion to those with interest.*

With the homage and intention thus expressed, the path of excellence and virtue is broadly opened. The topic of this book is the grave actions of taking life and eating meat. It is approached from spiritual and worldly perspectives, from the view point of this and future lives, and in

consideration of oneself and others. If one carefully considers this it will become self-evident and easy for anyone to understand that from all perspectives, this is the greatest fault of human beings. A few people in countries of the east and west have understood this and abandoned this practice. In these beings actions I rejoice and along with that will briefly explore this topic.

Two

A Spiritual Perspective, Part 1

In general, regardless of the tradition, religions teach beings the means of searching for happiness and truth. Suppose, if some should teach that one should kill and eat meat, need it be said that this would be a perverted path? By this act, one only increases the severe suffering, pain and hardship of animals. What wholesome reason could there be for doing so? Even though people feel good about their own religions and speak highly of them, on top of their not nurturing loving-kindness or a mind turned towards others benefit, they crave the taste of fellow sentient beings.

Among the various types of suffering others experience, the greatest is being killed without the slightest bit of conscience. If a discerning, intelligent person looks at this, this act can only be seen as a source of shame. In particular, for a Buddhist this contradicts the presentation of the Buddha's teachings. Further, there is no need to mention how this contradicts the view and conduct of the Mahayana where one is to cherish others more than

oneself. It also contradicts the training of the shravakas and pratekyabuddhas of the Theravada tradition. Abandoning harm and the causes of harm is the foundational training in the Theravada, and there is no greater harm than snatching the body and life from another being. Just like oneself, all other beings also only desire happiness and the means of sustaining their lives and bodies. Even if one accepts that, one may think that the Buddha never forbids his followers to eat meat. So from the Buddha himself,

Beings of the future
Through ignorance will say,
Eating meat is not a misdeed; it is okay.
The Buddha gave us permission.

Further from the *Lankavatara Sutra*,

If some say that I gave permission to eat meat, that is not so.

From the *Exalted Nirvana Sutra*,

Son of noble family, from now onwards eating meat is not permitted. The killing of this land is like taking the flesh of one's son. Having spoken thus, how have I permitted eating meat? Eating flesh destroys exalted loving-kindness.

The Buddha repeatedly and emphatically taught likewise in the Vinaya, the *Sutra for the Benefit of Angulimala*, *The Great Cloud Sutra*, *The Sutra of the Strength of the Elephant*, and so forth. When one becomes a follower of the Transcendent Conqueror, the Buddha one should completely abandon eating meat.

Some consider eating meat acceptable citing that it is not explicitly prohibited in the classifications of the ten non-virtuous acts, the four major infractions of the vows, the thirteen branch infractions, or in any other of the seven types of vows of individual liberation. Using such false reasoning they think that eating meat was not prohibited in the Vinaya; this is an utter mistake. In the Vinaya it also does not state that one should not slit one's father's throat, that one should not disembowel people, nor does it say that one should not smash animals' heads. Does this in turn mean that it gives permission to do so? Regarding the first example, it is classified under and prohibited as one of the heinous non-virtuous acts, i.e. the of killing one's

father; regarding the second, it contradicts the major vow of not taking life; and regarding the third, killing is classified as one of the ten non-virtuous acts. In the Vinaya it is stated that these are principal actions to refrain from. Therefore, ceasing taking life, one should also refrain from eating meat.

From the Lankavatara Sutra,

Further Lodro Chenpo, regarding the taking of life, some desiring profit earns their living by killing. Some meat-eating fools barter goods to buy flesh. In order to realize profit, these murders kill by hooks and snares the many classes of beings that fly in space, live in water and move about on the earth, all in search of gain. Lodro Chenpo, if one does not ask for it, if one does not search for it, and if one does not think about it, this thing called meat will not have any existence as such. Therefore, one should not eat meat.

In brief taking a life and eating meat occur in dependence upon one another. When it is said that there is no greater misdeed than killing, the fault of eating meat is included within that. However, one may wonder what it says in the texts of the Vinaya regarding the customs of giving and accepting meat. Nowhere does it say that it is not a fault to eat meat. But suppose there is a person suffering from an intense sickness for whom there is no way to not eat meat, it is said that that person should do so viewing the

meat as medicine, with a mind full of loving-kindness, and considering that the meat is the flesh of their child.

About such a situation the Buddha said,

Because I have always said that whatever one eats or drinks, one should consider it as the flesh of one's child and see it as medicine. One should not eat meat [without this attitude].

If one thinks that eating meat of the three-fold purity is permitted, regarding that, the Transcendent Conqueror, the one skilled in means said,

To those who strongly desire meat, I have taught the means to gradually abandon it.

And from the *Exalted Nirvana Sutra*,

In order to gradually establish beings in the training, I taught about meat of the three-fold purity, but now one should leave this behind.

The Buddha continued in the *Lankavatara Sutra*,

*With no asking for it, searching for it or thinking about it
There would be no meat of three-fold purity.
Since there is nothing without cause
One should not eat it.*

Also from the *Sutra of the Exalted Nirvana*,

One should vow to not eat even meat of the [three-fold purity].

And from *Noble Katayana*,

Eating one's father's flesh and beating one's mother,
Taking a sworn enemy into one's lap,
A wife gnawing on the bones of her husband,
The phenomena of this confused existence are absurd.

It is said that these are the ways of those who eat meat. In brief, having become a Buddhist of the Theravada, it is not permissible to eat meat.

Three

A Spiritual Perspective, Part 2

Since as a Mahayana practitioner one should readily give one's own life, it is certainly not appropriate to inflict suffering on others and eat their cherished bodies merely in search of something delicious for oneself. On top abandoning harm and the causes of harm, at its root the foundational training of the Mahayana is accomplishing the benefit of others. Further, the essence of all the teachings of the Mahayana is loving-kindness, compassion and bodhicitta. As the master Jampal Drakpa said, "The Mahayana practitioner should not be separated from loving-kindness and compassion for even an instant." Most would accept that in this world, there is not any punishment more severe one can bestow upon a criminal than taking their life. But to humble animals staying in solitude that have done no wrong, people inflict the greatest harm while still saying, "May I accomplish Buddhahood in order to benefit of all beings." If one thinks about such deeds,

forget about what others witnessing this would say, one will become a source of shame to oneself. As Gyalse Thokme said,

Beings that have been our relatives from beginningless time,
Even when they die naturally it is appropriate to shed tears.
Therefore it stands to reason that it is not appropriate to eat
This flesh that is killed for the purpose of meat.

If one reflects on the kindness that all beings have shown one, one's mind will be appropriately saddened even if a being dies naturally; it will be as if one's own parents had died. No need to mention the feeling that will arise when beings are killed for their flesh. Thus, even if one recites all sorts of majestic sounding phrases such as, "May I accomplish Buddhahood in order to benefit all beings," or "May all sentient beings be endowed with happiness and the causes of happiness," but does not possess loving-kindness and compassion, then there is not even a hint of a Mahayana practitioner to be found. There is no need for much analysis to discover whether or not one is endowed with loving-kindness and compassion. Look at the way one eats meat while not being endowed with the ability to liberate beings. When giving rise to loving-kindness and compassion, ought it not be directed

towards animals? If one engages in acts of causing pain and suffering to animals and even takes their lives while thinking, "I'm a Mahayana practitioner...I'm endowed with loving-kindness and compassion," then it seems that this compassion must be directed towards earth, stones and sticks! And if one thinks, "I only ate the meat...I did not kill the animal," then on top of not having compassion, is this not a sign of also not having any intelligence?

From the Lankavatara Sutra,

Killing animals for profit,
Trading goods for meat,
Those engaging in both these negative acts
Will fall into the [hell realms] upon death.

Thus, it is said that the fault of the killer and the eater are equal. However, if one wonders if the misdeed is less severe if it is meat of the three-fold purity, to expand on the earlier quoted scripture,

With no asking for it, searching for it or thinking about it
There would be no meat of three-fold purity.
Since there is nothing without cause
One should not eat it.

Four

A Spiritual Perspective, Part 3

Regarding the negative deeds related to eating meat even of the three-fold purity, there is still no difference from that of the killer. As a majority of the previous great beings of Tibet would not even wear clothes and shoes made with leather or skins, and as they avoided riding animals such as horses, there is no need to mention that they also did not eat meat. By looking at the Tibetan history books and life stories one will clearly be able to see that the majority of the lineage lamas from the eight great practice lineages including the bodhisattva Asanga, Dza Patrul Rinpoche, Zhalye Tsampa Rinpoche (the first Bokar Rinpoche) and other genuine beings in addition to countless other sangha members of mountain hermitages and monasteries, as well as male and female householders did not eat meat. That said, authentic beings who are able to lead beings from the lower realms, bodhisattvas with whom any connection whatsoever is meaningful, have eaten meat for the benefit of other beings. From the Sutra of the Exalted

Nirvana, "Regarding the powerful deeds to tame others, even eating meat is undertaken."

Mendong Tsampa Rinpoche said,

Some think, 'if eating meat is a great negative deed, why do many lamas eat it?' It is not that they crave and eat food under the power of the conflicting emotions. It is said that they eat with self-assured realization in order to lead beings and other exalted purposes.

So when it is said, "Compassionate people eat meat," one needs to understand that as explained above. Thus, other than engaging in one's own meditation on loving-kindness and compassion and giving up meat, one should not denigrate a genuine bodhisattva lama whose acts are actually for the benefit of beings. That would be a very serious fault.

In India, the siddhas Shavaripa, Tilopa and others engaged in the seemingly incongruous activities of hunting and fishing. Also in Tibet there was Lama Zhang who engaged in warfare. One should keep in mind that when seeing such lama bodhisattvas' activities it is beyond an ordinary individual's capacity to fathom them. For a Mahayana practitioner these activities are not something that should be emulated. In particular, for us the

principal objects of our meditation on compassion are the animals. We are clearly able to see that they are tormented by the intense suffering of the lower realms. We are able to abandon harming them and are even able to benefit them to some extent; therefore, we should meditate on compassion by means such as viewing them as our mother. As was said by the unequalled Gampopa,

All my mothers of this place, the sick, old and lowly, others take away their freedom and force them to work, beat and kill them. What a pity! Further as it is certain that all beings born as animals have been my mother, seeing their plight how can compassion not arise? Meditate on compassion desiring to free them from suffering.

These days when most people see butchers, hunters, fishermen, meat vendors and the like they say, "what a shame these evil doers." Yet they themselves buy meat, enjoy it, savor the taste and even offer a little to the three jewels, boasting that they themselves are Dharma practitioners. Fearing that sickness and suffering will afflict them they invite those who appear to be Buddhist practitioners to perform prayers. They come and enact a ritual without the least bit of understanding of karma, cause and effect or

emptiness and compassion. Then the patron offers the flesh of old mothers of previous lives to the monks and even overzealously enjoys the meat himself. Acting like this do they not become even a greater object of compassion than the butcher or fisherman? Butchers and fishermen do not know the Dharma. They have not taken refuge and bodhicitta vows and are not aware of karma, cause and effect. They do not have even slightest discernment to realize that like one's own body, others' also experience pain and suffering.

Five

A Spiritual Perspective, Part 4

The reasoning is established by the scriptural quotes and by logic. Particularly, these days the habit of the sangha eating meat is unsightly to most people. It disgraces the teachings and is a cause of the arising of wrong views toward the Dharma. The Buddha said, "If one eats meat it is a serious negative act. One should not take lives. Meditation on loving kindness and compassion is the heart essence of all the genuine teachings." But some people do not understand this, and based on the behavior of some individuals wearing Buddhist robes they think, "The compassion of the Buddhists is merely lip service. They are meat-eating, people-tricking barbarians." Further some call Tibetans "cow-eating fools" or say "they speak about loving kindness and compassion, but in practice they eat meat and take lives." For similar reasons others think that Buddhist monks are inauspicious and when they see them coming they quickly close their businesses. In brief, by proclaiming such unpleasant things, people develop wrong views towards

the refuge protectors of all beings, the only source of all happiness and benefit, namely the three jewels, and accumulate measureless negative acts.

The genuine lamas of the past have considered this and spoken of it.

For example, regarding the sangha's eating of meat, the divine lama Yeshe O said,

Less compassionate than flesh-eating demons
They like meat more than hawks and wolves.

Further,

If one becomes buddha by this behavior
Then hunters, fishermen, butchers and prostitutes
Without a single exception will certainly attain enlightenment.

From Je Changkya Rinpoche,

In the middle of a pile of flesh, blood and bones of animals
Killed for the sake of an offering to one,
Some hoist knives and act wild with desire
Like a host of guardians ready to subdue enemies.
Please look on these apparent sangha with compassion.

From Dza Paltrul Rinpoche,

These days flesh-eating demons [sangha who eat meat] have
become the objects of offerings.

Mendong Tsampa Rinpoche said,

One orders the killing. One does the killing. One eats the meat. It is taught that these negative acts are all similar. One has whatever food one desires, but likes only the flesh and blood of their slaughtered domestic animals that have been equally kind as one's parents. Some not only swallow, but ravenously eat it as if it were more delicious than other foods.

There are limitless such sayings.

Regarding Buddhists in general and monks and nuns in particular, by eating meat they not only accumulate negative deeds for self and other, but they disgrace the Buddha's teachings as well. Abandoning eating meat yourself, with folded hands I request you to encourage others to do so as well by explaining the faults of eating meat, the benefits of abandoning it, and the reasons why it is not appropriate.

Six

A Spiritual Perspective, Part 5

In the Secret Mantrayana or Vajrayana, these acts of taking life and eating meat become even more serious than in the Mahayana. These days many ignorant people say, "Meat and alcohol are samaya substances" and carelessly partake of them. What kind of practitioners of the vajrayana are these? They appear even viler than common, non-spiritual lay people.

Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa said,

In brief, the genuine Dharma is virtuous in the beginning, virtuous in the middle and virtuous in the end. It is taught that in the beginning one definitely needs to abandon certain actions. It is not possible that later one would need to practice contrary to that.

In the beginning the compassionate teacher skilled in means taught in a coarse way about action and result, abandoning wrong doing, embracing virtue, and presented the result of the peaceful path. Elaborating on these, the teachings gradually became more and more subtle and profound.

Finally, he taught that all of these completely fall under the nature of emptiness and compassion. Since this is the defining characteristic of

Buddhist teachings, actions that harm sentient beings must be completely abandoned. Even in the lower classes of the tantras of the secret mantra it is said that a mere trace of meat, alcohol, garlic, onions, etc. is not appropriate to be mixed with one's food. Particularly, there is never a time when eating meat and killing would be permitted.

From the yoga tantra tradition,

One should not drink alcohol.
One should not eat meat and the like.
One should not harm sentient beings.
These acts should never be engaged in.

And,

Even if one comes to die, this is easy.
The killing of living beings isn't so.

From the Twofold Hevajra Tantra,

One should not kill.
By merely harming sentient beings
One will not be able to master the supreme siddhi.

Thus, it is also explained in all the other tantras.

The unexcelled mantra has superior means, and even though there is a need for the samaya substances of the five meats and so forth, these do not come from causing suffering for animals or by garnering flesh and blood by killing. From the teachings on the twenty-five tantric vows that vajrayanists certainly need to protect, the first is abandoning killing and the seventh is abandoning eating meat, an inadmissible food. In general, yak meat, fish, and the like are not appropriate meats for a samaya substance. Samaya substances come from animals for which there is no tradition of killing for food, such as dogs, and should come from a being that has died naturally.

Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa said,

Flesh and blood killed per one's request and flesh and blood obtained by trading are not samaya substances. Because for these, by the mere existence an eater, there is a killer. Therefore the killed meat that you got or bought is tainted by thoughts of duality. It is therefore inadmissible meat and a tantric practitioner is not permitted to eat it as a samaya substance. Something that has died naturally in a place where such a being is never killed for the purpose of food, something that just happened to die or that which has been discarded is easy to find and admissible. Therefore, a yogi partakes of these as being equal in taste to primordial wisdom not bound by clinging to tastes of delicious or not delicious, good or bad. In the noble land of India there was no killing of the so-called five meats for the purpose of food so it was permitted to use them.

In some places if some of the five meats are killed for food, then these should be abandoned, and in their place one should use meat from an animal for which there is no custom of killing. As explained in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, at one time in the country of Tibet, as cattle were killed for the purpose of meat, the meat of a crow should be used as a replacement. This would be in accordance with the meaning. In brief whether one is a sutrayana practitioner or a mantrayana practitioner, murdered flesh and blood is an inadmissible food and definitely needs to be abandoned.

Seven

A Worldly Perspective

In accordance with the worldly point of view, in many places individuals who eat meat are considered to be of a lower class; they have an unclear intellect, an unpleasant complexion, an unpleasant disposition, a foul smell, greater anger, etc. They are said to possess many faults.

Elaborating on the above statements, according to Tibetan mythology, two classes of beings have developed from the union of the father, the monkey and the mother, the ogress. One race craves meat, kills, is without compassion and harms others. In order to nourish their own bodies they take the lives of others and so forth. This harmful, coarse behavior is that of the line coming from the mother, the ogress and is classified as negative and impure. The opposite of that is those who have abandoned taking life, do not eat meat, and being endowed with compassion, they do not harm. Analogous to one's own body, they realize that the pain and suffering of others is the same as their own. They are the refined class, those of noble conduct

belonging to the family of the bodhisattva-father, the monkey. They are classified as excellent and pure. This is clearly stated in the *Mani Kabum*, *The Clear Mirror of History* and other works. Furthermore, among all peoples of all places, those who eat meat come to be known as an inferior class. Particularly, in India and some other countries, meat eaters, butchers, hunters, fishermen, and thieves are considered the lowest class of people by those who do not eat meat. Those who are of a higher class, such as the brahmins of India, look down upon and consider impure those who do eat meat and even shun them like people who have been struck by a seriously contagious disease.

In general, after eating meat, one's body feels heavy and the consciousness is foggy and unclear. Also, these days in schools where the students do not eat meat the pupils are more intelligent and sharper witted while the faculties of those who do eat meat are dulled, and they are more forgetful.

Further, those who eat meat have a poor, unattractive complexion. It is said in the writings of the Kangyur and Tengyur that to non-humans and animals, the appearance of those who eat meat is ugly and unattractive like that of a demon. Those who eat meat think nothing of harming and injuring others and have lesser tendency to think of others' benefit. To gods, nagas and other humans who abstain from eating meat, meat eaters have a very bad smell and their minds do not seem to have much happiness. Even others see that they are mentally agitated and appear unsettled. These are some of the results of eating meat.

Eight

From the Perspective of this Life

It is said that eating meat and taking others' lives shortens one's life and encourages illness. Since by eating meat a variety of diseases arise and as there is no difference between the negative acts of eating meat and killing, eating meat causes one's own life to be shortened. From Paltrul Rinpoche, "Regarding craving the taste of flesh and blood and enjoying eating it while devoid of compassion, it is said that there is no difference between the evil deed of the patron and receiver. There are many consequences, but the direct result is a shortened life and being afflicted by many diseases." The protector Nagarjuna said,

One who kills, their own life will be shortened,
One who harms will be injured even more.

From the unequalled Dakpo Rinpoche, Gampopa, "It is said that even if one is born as a human, their life will be short and they will incur many illnesses."

Paltrul Rinpoche said, "Having taken lives in the past, presently one's life will be short and full of disease. Some small children once born immediately die.

This is a result in accordance with the cause, the cause being formerly taking other's lives. Thus, in many births they will die just after being born. From the time they are quite young until they grow old and meet with death, some people are wracked with various diseases, never able to be cured. This is the fruit that ripens from the seeds of killing and other physically abusive acts" It is said that from such actions of a previous life, one's later lives will be short and full of many diseases. Further one should understand that this life could also be shortened and full of many diseases. Due to the specific karma of this world, the results of this life's actions can ripen in this life. Thus one should abandon taking others' lives.

However, if one thinks that it is still okay to eat meat, one should know that the Buddha said that there is no difference between doing so and taking beings' lives. Therefore, one should also abandon eating meat. By doing so, one will be saving the lives of animals which will not only contribute to a long life and the elimination of diseases for oneself, but on top of that there are

measureless other benefits. Even if one ransoms just one life, the benefits are said to be extraordinarily great. The *Acharya Vasubandu* said,

Having freed a being led to the slaughterhouse
That being's life is thus benefited.
By completely abandoning the harming of beings
One will obtain a long life oneself.

Being a doctor, tending to the sick, and
Offering medicines - by engaging in deeds such as these,
And by abandoning harming with stones and sticks
Oneself will be without illness.

Thus if one desires to be free of illness and have long life, one should definitely abandon the greatest harm one can inflict upon others, that is killing them and eating their flesh.

In general, that which is called meat consists of various impure objects: semen, blood of the womb, veins, tendons, pus, and other bodily fluids. There are also various diseases in the bodies of the animals that are killed. Most of the animals in slaughter houses either have been beaten by hand and stick thus experiencing much physical hardship since youth, are ill, old, infected by various bacteria and germs, or are those not able to be forced to work any longer. Even at the time of their slaughter, once killed the flesh is mixed with

the old blood and filth of the previous animals. Flies and insects of other sordid places deposit various impure substances, seeds of diseases on the meat. By faulty practices such as these, a variety of new diseases are appearing. Further in some countries, in order to make the animals' fat they are given certain medicines and injections. Those who eat this type of meat can acquire a variety of related diseases. As has been said by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and as can be seen in current newspapers, in China they are making new varieties of meat by mixing chicken and pork, for example. There is really no need for these sorts of acts. Further, as a result of this, newspapers are reporting the arising of new types of diseases.

In western countries they employ a variety of means in order to fatten up their chicken, pigs, cows, and other livestock. It is said that much difficulty has arisen from people having eaten this type of meat; some have even become infected with a variety of diseases which have never been seen before. To quote Paltrul Rinpoche, "Especially these days most people have a great craving for meat. Based on carelessly enjoying flesh and blood there

is almost no one who does not have some sort of illness." Further, due to faulty behavior and diet many causes of death have arisen such as tumors, phlegm disorders, and water diseases. It is said that there are countless such afflictions. Thus those who desire to be free of illness and wish to have a long life definitely should abandon eating meat.

Nine

From the Perspective of Future Lives

The presentation of karmic results in general, and specifically the extent to which eating meat and killing beings will produce immeasurable negativity in future lives is inconceivable to ordinary beings. However, the Buddha, the teacher who was skilled in means and endowed with compassion has perfectly taught that one should engage in virtue and abandon negative acts. The great scholars of India who were without rival in this world, Nagarjuna, Asanga and others, the noble ones who dwell on the bodhisattva levels have settled this as truth. Further the twenty-five greatly accomplished ones of Tibet (King Trisong Detsen and his followers); Marpa, Milarepa and Gampopa; Tsongkapa, Gyaltsab and Gelek Peldzam; and the five forefathers of the Sakya, through their practice were established on the level of great accomplishment and discovered the certainty of this truth, therefore we need not be led down the path of doubt. It is said in the Sutra of Close Mindfulness that even by killing one being one will experience the

sufferings of hell for an eon and will pay with five hundred of one's own lives.

Further, there is no evil act greater than killing.

Regarding killing, it is a grave wrongful act. A further reason is that except for hell beings, there is no one who is not afraid of death. The Buddha, the Transcendent Conqueror, said to the six monks at Gyalje Tsal,

All fear punishment.
All are afraid of death.
Thinking of how oneself would feel,
Do not beat and do not kill.
All fear punishment,
All cherish their life,
Thinking of how oneself would feel,
Do not beat and do not kill

Thus it is said since there is nothing one cherishes more than one's life and body.

Also regarding the faults inherent in eating meat, from the Lankavatara Sutra,

Having died one will fall into the hell of tormented lamentations.
It is said that the fully ripened result is that one must take rebirth in hell.
Having died one falls into the class of the carnivorous beasts,
Will be born in foul smelling and lowly places,
Or will be born as a fool.
The majority in the lowest classes of society.

One will be born as a hunter, butcher,
Or in the hungry ghost realm.
One will be born as a meat eater.
One will always take birth in the womb of demons.

Regarding the result that is in accordance with the cause, from Jestsun
Milarepa,

By engaging in the evil act of killing
One will like food of flesh and blood.
By the karma that follows from killing,
Of the six realms one will take the body of a hungry ghost.
By enjoying evil acts one will fall into the lower realms.
By desiring food of flesh and blood,
One very much enjoys killing and taking lives.
One takes the wretched form of a hungry ghost.
By engaging in evil acts one takes birth in hell.
Not remembering the seeds of liberation
There are no means of liberation, what a pity!

From the second volume of the Kalay Gozang, the stories of the enlightened
acts of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, "Since these Mongol kings enjoy flesh and
blood, it should be very difficult to be reborn in the higher realms. As many
take excellent births as gods and men, I think this must be due to the power
of unwavering faith in the three jewels." Further by eating meat, in future
lives one will be killed and eaten by others. In brief, one should have no doubt

regarding the certainty of being burdened by an endless, heavy load of suffering that arises from eating meat.

Ten

In Consideration of Oneself

As was explained earlier, the result of eating meat and killing is experiencing the fierce burden of suffering for a very long time. Just as the fish is fooled by the hook and the moth by the candle flame, merely by the taste of flesh, the happiness and comfort of this and future lives are destroyed. What a great loss, such great foolery. As Milarepa said,

This way of killing animals is heart wrenching.
Such a loss this way of fooling oneself.
How helpless, our parents' dying.
This way of heaping up meat of defilement,
What do you do with so much blood?
How hungry you must be, the way you eat so much meat!

In brief, thus it is said that even in consideration of one's own benefit, actions like this should definitely be abandoned.

Eleven

In Consideration of Others

Most people when they see meat, other than merely noticing how delicious it appears or judging the quality, they do not think about the fact that it is a result of some animal's experiencing immeasurable fear at being separated from its cherished life and body. Never mind how you would feel if your neck were cut and your skin flayed, suppose if you cut even a little bit of flesh of your thigh, how would that feel? Would it look delicious or not? Just like oneself, animals desire happiness. They also cherish their bodies and lives and fear pain and physical suffering. But in order to rob them of their flesh and hides, men surround the animals and without conscience or shame approach them with knife and rope in hand. They seize them, bind their limbs, and throw them to the ground on their backs. The animals know that they are about to be killed, but there is no means of escape, no one to rescue them. Then their throat is cut by a long sharp knife that is unbearable to look at. With all their strength the killers saw back and forth on the

animal's throat. A red stream of blood flows to the ground and spurts into the air. Gasping for their last breath, it audibly escapes from their slit throat. In agonizing pain their bodies writhe violently. Their eyes bulge and become filled with tears. Still if it takes a little while for the animal to die, the killers become angry and violently stab the animal again and again with their knives, hit and beat them. Then, even as the steam is still rising from the animal's body they begin to remove the skin with their sharp knives, but the inner breath, the last bastions of life is not easily stopped - think about how this must feel!

Some thrust the tip of their knife directly into the heart. Some chop off the head with an axe. Others break the skull with a mallet. Some bind the mouth to suffocate the animal. Others skin the animal alive. In brief, the animals are killed in a state of inconceivable fear and physical torment. Not only that, but when the animals are young their mother's milk is stolen from their mouths. When they grow older they are forced to work and receive only blows and beatings. Sometimes as a means to make them grow larger, the

animals are castrated or spayed. Finally when the animal has grown old, lost its vigor and become infirm, it is led to the slaughter house where it becomes meat and blood to be put in humans gaping mouths. From *The Letter to a Friend* by Nagarjuna,

Some die for their pearls, wool, bones and blood
Others for their flesh and skin.
Powerless, others strike them with hand, foot,
Rod and hook prodding them to work.

Like these humans inflict immeasurable torment on animals, and further the main reason is in order to eat their flesh. In brief, when hearing about or seeing animals being killed, if you considered that the animal was your own mother, what would you do? Or if it was yourself, how do you think you would feel? If you generate thoughts like this again and again, giving up meat will not be a difficult endeavor but will be a cause for loving kindness and compassion to increase. As a means of meditating on loving kindness and compassion, Paltrul Rinpoche taught, "Now think carefully, having seen the suffering of these animals, how does it feel if you meditate that it were you? Cover your mouth and nose with your hands stopping your breathing and

stay like that for a bit. What is that pain and fear like?" If one were to condense all the meaning into one statement one could say: All the intense suffering of the animals arises based on oneself, therefore it is taught that one needs to abandon eating meat.

Twelve

Conclusion

In general by saying, "Do not do harm ... Do not eat meat," this is not saying that one should practice Dharma. Whether one wants to practice Dharma or not, since abandoning harm and not eating meat are the unexcelled means of generating peace and happiness, it is of great importance to be able to put this into practice. If one only considers whether meat is delicious or not, it will be difficult to abandon it. But as was explained earlier, if one carefully thinks about the source of meat and the nature of its existence, giving it up will not be such an arduous task. Even if one is not able completely abandon it immediately, if one reads this again and again, the contents of this book will come to mind from time to time and when one sees or hears of animals being killed, if one thinks of these beings as oneself or one's mother, gradually and naturally the desire to eat meat will disappear.

Further, it is also very important to make aspirations such as, "May I not desire to eat meat," and "In the future may I be born as a vegetarian."

When the crown jewel of all those accomplished in both practice and scholarship, the bodhisattva Lodro Thaye was nearing death, he was repeatedly heard saying, "I made the aspiration that I be born as a being that does not desire to eat meat." Just as it is clear in his biography, what the genuine beings show us are very important teachings to be taken to heart. Therefore, regarding this arrangement of a brief synopsis of the Buddha's teachings regarding the faults of eating meat, the benefits of abandoning it, together with the reasons that it is an unsuitable act, I hope it will be of some small benefit to the tormented animals and to the tradition of human's unrestrained acts that cause destitution for self and others. I myself barely know how to read but since this is a compilation of the unmistakable words of the genuine lamas, I think it is worthy of confidence.

Even though beings each more than the next are busy striving
for happiness
No one attains it except the enlightened ones.
Therefore, may their teachings and the spiritual masters who
hold them
Steadfastly remain until the end of the countless eons.

By the melodious sounds of peace and non-violence entering everyone's ears
May dark hearts, wrong thoughts and deeds vanish into space without
remainder. By the power of mutual loving kindness and benefit pervading
the three worlds May all beings enjoy the glory of absolute peace and
happiness!

Sarvamangalam.

Afterword

Dedication Verses by Bokar Rinpoche

Alas, these deluded and ignorant beings
Are not able to bear even a spark on their own bodies.
But by craving and desirous attachment towards the
taste of flesh
Like actual demons they are able to hack others'
bodies to pieces.

To beings, our old mothers who have lovingly
Nurtured us with immeasurable kindness from
beginningless time,
Shamelessly and ruthlessly we act contrarily and
Acquire a miserable existence and negative karma,
what a pity!

In the future, in this and all my rebirths Having been
accepted by the supreme and noble Chenrezig May
my three gates be free from the unspeakable faults,
May I be born in a pure realm and be a guide for
beings!

Thus, Minyak Phurbu Tashi, a graduate of the Rumtek Shedra, while staying here in the three-year, three-month retreat in the Mirik retreat center Zungjuk Gatsal Ling in the District of Darjeeling, has abandoned killing and taking meat as food. Further for others he has written of the faults of eating meat and the benefits of abandoning it. Along with being pleased and

rejoicing from my heart, these aspirations have arisen so I have written them down. May they be endowed with meaning!

By the one named Bokar Tulku

Karma Ngedon Chokyi Lodro

June 26, 2003

Dedication

By the merits of printing this book, may all spiritual teachers teaching true paths to enlightenment have long and healthy lives and continue to benefit all sentient beings.

May all the wishes and aspirations of all our sponsors and benefactors be fulfilled according to the Holy Dharma. May all their obstacles be pacified and may they have good health and success always.

May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes.
May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes.
May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrowless bliss.
May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, be free of bias, attachment and anger.

May whoever sees, touches, reads, remembers, talks or thinks about this book never be reborn in unfortunate circumstances, receive on rebirths in situation conducive to the perfect practice of Dharma, meet a perfectly qualified spiritual guide, quickly develop bodhicitta and immediately attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space, and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.

In whichever realm, country, area or place this book may be, may there be no war, drought, famine, disease, injury, disharmony or unhappiness, may there be only great prosperity, may everything needed be easily obtained, and may all be guided by only perfectly qualified Dharma teachers, enjoy the happiness of Dharma, have love and compassion for all sentient beings, and only benefit and never harm each other.

The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

One's karmic misgivings will dissolve, while heavy ones lighten.
One will be protected by devas and be unharmed by natural and man-made disasters.
One will always be free from the suffering of hatred and vengeance.
One will be unharmed by yaksas, evil spirits and wild beasts.
One's mind will be at peace, free from harm and nightmares.
One's complexion will be radiant.
One will be full of auspicious energy.

One who practices the Dharma wholeheartedly will have adequate living necessities.
One's family will be harmonious and be blessed with fortune and wisdom.
One who practices what one preaches will be respected and loved by all.
One who is dull-minded will gain wisdom.
One who is ill will gain health.
One who is poor will gain wealth.
One who is female will be born male in future lives if one wishes to.
One will be free of being reborn in the negative realms.
One will be able to help others grow in wisdom and gain great merit in doing so.
One will always be able to learn the Dharma, till one's wisdom and spiritual penetrations are fully grown and becomes a Buddha.

What to do with Dharma teachings?

The Buddha-dharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like the one in your hand show you how to put teaching into practice and integrate them into your life, whereby you get the happiness you seek. Therefore, anything contains Dharma teachings or the name of your teachers is more precious than other material objects and should be treated with respect. To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in the future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other stuff, step over or sit upon them, or use them for

mundane purpose such as propping up wobbly tables. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings, and wrapped with cloth when being carried around. These are but a few considerations.

Epilogue

A Lesson in Compassion

Once in a restaurant, a group of people were talking about vegetarianism next to my table. Eavesdropping I heard that one or two were vegetarian. Among the six diners who were expressing their ideas each were trying to prove that they were right.

"This is good, they have vegetarian food here," the man with full smile said looking at the menu. His friend looked at him and responded, "I didn't know that you are a vegetarian." "How long you have been vegetarian?" "I have been pure vegetarian for five years and before that I used to eat fish." the first man replied.

They started a conversation and one of them said, "I wish I could be a vegetarian. But my body, I mean, my doctor says I have to eat some meat. I'd really like to stop though, because the way people treat the animals is horrible."

A woman with a glass of beer, shaking her head, said, "But the animals are created by God for human's food. On this planet every one eats each other like the creature in the ocean."

Here a surprising thing happened. A woman from the other table asked, "Excuse me, can I tell you some things I've read about meat in books and newspapers?" I have been told that, if one desires to be free of illness and have long life, one should definitely abandon the greatest harm one can inflict upon others. That is killing them and eating their flesh. In general, that which is called meat consists of various impure objects: semen, blood of the womb, veins, tendons, pus, and other bodily fluids.

There are also various diseases in the bodies of the animals that are killed. Most animals in slaughter houses either have been beaten by hand or by stick thus experiencing much physical hardship since youth. They are ill, old, infected by various bacteria and germs, or are animals not able to be forced to work any longer. Even at the time of their slaughter, once killed the flesh is mixed with the old blood and filth of the previous animals. Flies and

insects of other sordid places deposit various impure substances, seeds of diseases on the meat. By faulty practices such as these, a variety of new diseases are appearing. Further in some countries, in order to make the animal's fat they are given certain medicines and injections. As can be seen in current newspapers China is mixing chicken and pork, for example. In western countries they employ a variety of means in order to fatten up their chickens, pigs, cows, and other livestock. It is said that much difficulty has arisen from people having eaten this type of meat. Some have even become infected with a variety of diseases which have never been seen before."

Before that day in the restaurant I was a meat eater and never gave it any thought. After that day I started to consider about eating meat. I realized that eating meat results in animal's experiencing immeasurable fear and pain at being separated from their cherished life and body. I said to myself, "How would you feel if your neck were cut and your skin flayed. Suppose if you cut even a little bit of flesh off your thigh. How would that feel, would it look delicious or not?" In some places you don't see the reality; the meat is so

nicely packed up and frozen. Some other places the whole process is clearly in front of your eyes."

One day when I was in Darjeeling, I went to the bazaar and saw a man with one eye. He sold living fowls and butchered them on the spot. He cut the chicken's head and put it into a container. Then with the chicken's body still moving he plucked and gutted the bird. I couldn't imagine how fearful and painful an experience the chicken had at that point. After a pretty long time its wings still moved from the body in the man's hand and the eyes cycled on the head in the container with a great sense of pain and fear. What a coincidence! I could see some of my friends in a nearby restaurant. The man sold the chicken to the restaurant and they cooked it for my friends. I have no idea where the chicken is now but I had a extraordinarily strong feeling about that! On that day I stopped eating meat.

However, I thought my friend might be interested in becoming a vegetarian too. I mentioned to him about the chicken he ate in the restaurant. He was a really good friend but we had such a big disagreement on this point.

He thinks that animals are food for humans given to them by the god. To me it was unbelievable that he didn't believe the reality in front of his eyes. See how the animals are suffering, but he believes in some things that he has never seen. Maybe it is even not a belief, I thought, he just doesn't care about the others fear and pain. He likes the meat, and at the same time he also wants be on the right side; God, food for humans, he has all kinds of ideas to cover his negative actions. It seems a convenient excuse for him. "You should open your mind little bit," I told him, "our own body is a kind of teacher, and from our own physical pain we learn that others have the same problems and pains. Considering this we don't want to harm others. If we don't learn this lesson, then we would be terrible. The fisherman cuts the fish just like he cuts potatoes, because he doesn't know the fish's pain. If he could feel the pain of the fish then I am sure he would never hurt the fish again." He listened to me very carefully and said, "But somebody will kill them anyway." I didn't want to continue talking with him. But I thought, "It's the same thing to say, 'I should kill him because he will die anyway.'"

Due to these experiences, I don't kill and eat. Although I can see so many people are naturally kind and nice but very confused with all kinds of ideas; such as God gave the animals for human's food, the Buddha never forbids his followers to eat meat. Some kill, & eat the animal, then they pray for it. To them this is compassion. Some have the idea that meat is good for the health. Some even think if we don't eat animals they will eat us. That is really funny idea, what we eat is cow, fish, lamp, pig etc but they will never eat us. If someone is worried about that then he or she should eat the mosquitoes and the tigers.

From all these reasons, I composed this book and I hope many people will aware that to be a vegetarian is a profound means of practicing compassion and loving kindness. It is the foundation of all spiritual practices and in particular it surely contributes to enjoying a long and healthy life. I hope this is of some benefit to all who encounter this reading.

Appendix

How to Be a Vegetarian

To become a vegetarian is a not very difficult thing when you understand the nature of meat and the result of eating it.

It is a very hard thing trying not to eat your favorite delicious foods until you discover they have been cooked in contaminated water and touched by a sick person's hand covered with bacteria and somebody was killed in order to get it. When you discover that you will not have the slightest desire of eating your favorite dish. Meat is like that, it might be your favorite food but it is dirty, it has bacteria and some one was killed in order to get it.

There are four ways to be a vegetarian, half vegetarian, full vegetarian, pure vegetarian and strict vegetarian.

Half vegetarian means you eat only one or two kinds of meat and give up the rest, or you eat meat occasionally. It is a good thing not to eat all kinds of creatures and give up some meat that you used to eat, and also a good thing that you are not eating every day but only occasionally. Never listen to others,

people may say strange things about you, "Why do you give up only one kind of meat?", "You are funny." and so on.

Full vegetarians don't eat any kind of flesh and blood but eat eggs. People sometimes are not happy if someone is doing something good; these people always try to find out faults of others and gossip about them. I heard many people saying, "That person is a hypocrite, they give up eating meat but eat eggs." "Egg is also living being" and so on. Egg might be a living being but it is not meat and giving up eat meat doesn't mean you don't eat anything from animals. Actually there are two different kinds of eggs. A hen will produce eggs on a regular basis. The rooster can either fertilize these eggs or not. It doesn't matter to the hen; her body produces eggs. The eggs that are not fertilized are not living beings. When the rooster and the hen produce a fertilized egg this is a living being.

Pure vegetarians, of course, don't eat any kind of flesh and also give up eating eggs. This is a very good thing for health, animals, environment, and nature. You can get a totally balanced diet without eating meat. All vegetables

contain protein and too much protein consumption is unhealthy. Grains, legumes and soybeans contain plenty of protein. Vegetarian foods do not have to be boring. Spice it up! For example, veggies and rice with some Teriyaki sauce are delicious and as filling as any meat dish you can think of while being far more healthy for you and easier on animals and the environment. Why not give a vegetarian diet a try and give our environment a break. Your body will thank you and so will the Earth!

Strict vegetarian means not eating any kind of food from animals, such as meat, egg, cheese, butter and also not wearing leather. I myself am not a strict vegetarian, it is too hard for me, but many of my friends are strict vegetarians and I really admire them.

Glossary of Terms

Arhat An arhat is someone who has eliminated the afflictive emotions, but who has not achieved the omniscience of a buddha.

Bodhicitta is both the mind that aspires to attain buddhahood so that all beings can be freed from their ignorance and suffering (relative bodhicitta) and the mind that sees the emptiness of all things. (absolute bodhicitta.)

Bodhisattva is someone who either aspires to attain buddahood or is someone who through their practice is close to doing so.

Brahmins The caste in Hinduism that performs ritual religious observances.

Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit.) The embodiment of the compassion of all the buddhas. Meditation on Chenrezig and recitation of his mantra, "om mani padme hum," is the most widely practiced religious observance in Tibet.

Dharma The Buddha's teachings for liberation from suffering

Emptiness The absence of all conceivable characteristics in phenomena.

Four root infractions of monastic vows that require expulsion: killing, stealing, sexual intercourse, or lying about one's spiritual attainments.

Liberation The elimination of suffering and its cause by seeing the true mode of abiding of mind and phenomena.

Lama Any person qualified to be a spiritual teacher in Tibetan Buddhism. Most usually an ordained man or woman who has completed the traditional spiritual retreat.

Mahayana The school of Buddhism that aspires to achieve the full enlightenment of a buddha through the cultivation of love and compassion and meditation on emptiness.

Mantra A short prayer in Sanskrit recited for its blessing rather than its meaning. "Om mani padme hum" is an example of a mantra.

Meat of three-fold purity Under the rules of the monastic code, meat may be eaten if the animal was not seen, heard, or suspected to be killed for the sake of the meal.

Nagas Elemental spirits associated with bodies of water, pictured as serpents or dragons. The most fortunate rebirth in the animal realm.

Pratekyabuddha A person who attains enlightenment during a time when the Buddha's teaching has been lost, but who lacks the wisdom to teach it to others.

Pretas Beings who through their selfishness and desire are born as spirits who suffer the pain of desire but lack the means to satisfy it.

Primordial wisdom The fundamental wisdom that all beings possess but are unable to see because of their confusion.

Refuge in the three jewels Taking refuge is making the commitment to seek liberation by following the guidance of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. (q.v.)

Sadhana. A tantric practice where one generates a visualization of oneself as a buddha, and then dissolves the visualization and rests in emptiness.

Samsara The existence of ordinary beings, characterized by constant rebirth in one or another of the six planes of rebirth (gods, demigods, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts, hellbeings).

Sangha The community of Buddhists. In the context of the refuge vow it refers to the noble sangha, those who have achieved enlightenment.

Sentient beings Any being that is conscious, that is, has a mind and can experience phenomena.

Seven types of vows Lay, novice, or fully ordained vows for men or women, plus a second novitiate for women.

Shakyamuni "Sage of the Shakyas" (also known by his personal name Gautama or his family name Siddhartha). The historical Buddha, who lived in the 6th century BCE in North India.

Shravakas The disciples of Shakyamuni, who seek their own enlightenment by relying on his teaching.

Siddha A practitioner of tantra who has achieved definite results from practice (siddhis) and whose behavior is often unconventional.

Sutra Buddhist scripture containing a teaching by the Buddha

Sutrayana The school of Buddhism that seeks enlightenment by cultivating its causes, the practices of virtue and meditation.

Tantra The school of Buddhism that seeks enlightenment relying on the result, that is, that the body, speech and mind of the buddha are present as potential in all sentient beings.

Ten non-virtuous acts Three physical acts (killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct) four speech acts (lying, abusive talk, slander, and idle chatter) and three mental acts (malice, envy, and disbelief in morality). Binding for all persons, not just Buddhists.

Theravada tradition The school of Buddhism, found mainly in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, based on the scriptures in the Pali language.

Thirteen branch infractions Monastic vows whose violation require confession and expiation, but not expulsion.

Vajrayana another name for tantra, literally the indestructible (diamond) vehicle.

The Vinaya the section of Buddhist scripture describing the monastic code.

Wish fulfilling jewel A mythical gem used as a metaphor in Buddhism.

Yidam The principal buddha that a practitioner visualizes in meditation.

Yogi A person who practices and keeps the vows of the highest class of tantra