

to go and say something you knew to be at fault about a perishable commodity. I was not worried. Everything that I said on that show, I believed to be true. It took us about two hours to tape the show. After we finish taping the show, I walked up to Oprah Winfrey and I said to Oprah: "Oprah, give me ten minutes. I'll get you off of chicken." Oprah looked at me and said, "Only one animal a day!" I was not worried. I went out and started doing my thing. A few weeks later, I got a call from the *National News Magazine*, and was asked, "Do you realize that you are being sued along with Oprah Winfrey by a group of Texas cattlemen?" I said, "No! I don't know that to be true." I said, "Can I put

you on hold?" I raced in my library. I inventoried my vegetarian cookbooks. I knew those cattlemen wanted those vegetarian cookbooks bad. I went back and called Oprah, and I said, "Oprah, if we lose this suit, I'm throwing in my vegetarian cookbooks. You've got to put up the money."

The trial was to be held in Amarillo, Texas. I don't know whether you've ever been to Amarillo, Texas. It is not the end of the world, but it is clearly visible from there. Prior to the trial, USDA and FDA did exactly what I called for. They had been feeding the cows with sheep and goats.

And I said, "Sure, we will go to Amarillo, Texas."

The judge was a seventy-six old lady. A tough old lady. I was sure she would dismiss the case, seeing how exactly what I called for was exactly what the USDA and FDA were carrying out. I went to Amarillo, Texas. All over town, there were bumper stickers that said, "The only mad cow in Texas is named Oprah." The largest employer in Amarillo was a slaughter facility killing cows. I knew we were in trouble. I said to my lawyer, "We need to change venue." We went to the judge and said, "Your honor, we would like to change venue."

She picked up the hammer, slammed it down, and said, "Motion denied."

(A talk given by Howard Lyman in the CTTB Buddha Hall on March 15, 2008/Chinese translated by Yvonne Chu)

☞ To be continued

上人對素齋解答 慈悲護生心

A Heart of Compassion for All Life

--The Venerable Master's Answers to Questions on Vegetarianism

1. 問：吃齋到底有什麼好處？不吃齋到底有什麼不好處？

上人：你吃齋，是活著吃虧；不吃齋，是死後吃虧。

2. 問：吃齋好像是自己騙自己，自己上了當了？

上人：你吃齋覺得是上當了，只是活著時上當，可是死後不上當；你不吃齋，活著不上當，死了上當。你把這賬碼拉起來（算一算），你欠錢就要還錢，欠甚麼就要還甚麼。

3. 問：佛教為什麼提倡吃齋？

上人：吃葷者欲念重，吃素者欲念

輕。耶穌不一定教人吃齋；有些宗教謂：「所有生靈都是為人類而預備，故人吃肉是天公地道。」但佛教是主張同體大悲精神，視一切眾生皆有佛性，皆堪作佛，故主張戒殺護生。

4. 問：一般人認為肉類比較有營養，對身體有益，請問上人的看法如何？

上人：其實並不是肉有營養，對身體有益健康。現在世界上很多吃肉的人，都生癌症。

5. 問：吃肉是一般人的習慣，現在應該怎麼樣革除這種習慣呢？

上人：「肉」字裏邊兩個人，裏面罩著外邊人，眾生還吃眾生肉，仔細思量是人吃人。

6. 問：佛弟子若已受五戒、菩薩戒是否該謹守戒條，茹素徹底呢？

上人：當然了！不守戒條，受戒幹什麼？

7. 問：受戒之後是否一定要吃長素？由於環境的不方便，是否可以吃肉邊菜？

上人：你若到六祖那樣的誠心，可以吃肉邊菜；你若不到六祖大師的那個程度，還是少吃肉是好的。

8. 問：在外應酬時是否可吃肉邊菜？

上人：你願意吃毒藥也沒有人管著你。

9. 問：弟子有一個孩子，年齡五歲，去年

目睹雞販殺雞，痛哭發願，永不食眾生肉，至今守之不疑，請教上人，弟子要如何幫助他增長慧根？

上人：他不吃眾生肉，就不去做眾生了！



Q1: What are the advantages to being a vegetarian? What are the disadvantages to being a non-vegetarian?

A: You lose out by being a vegetarian while alive. As a non-vegetarian, you will lose out after death.

Q2: What are the advantages to being a vegetarian? Are we cheating ourselves by being vegetarians?

A: If you feel cheated as a vegetarian, you should know that you're only cheated while alive, but not after you die. You may not feel cheated as a non-vegetarian while alive, but you will be cheated after you die. When you settle the accounts, you need to pay what you owe and in the form that you had borrowed it.

Q3: Why does Buddhism encourage vegetarianism?

A: Those who eat meat have strong de-



sires while vegetarians have less. Jesus did not necessarily teach people to be vegetarians. Some religions allege that all creatures are made for the human race, so it is reasonable for people to eat

meat. However, Buddhism believes in compassion and treating all living beings as if everyone were the same. Buddhism maintains that we should avoid killing and protect life because we see all living beings as having the Buddha nature and the potential to become Buddhas.

Q4: Most people think that meat is more nutritious and better for the body. What does the Venerable Master think?

A: Actually, meat is no more nutritious or better for one's health. There are lots of people who eat meat and develop cancer.

Q5: Most people have the habit of eating meat; how can we eliminate this kind of habit?

A: Two "people" are in the Chinese character for "meat": One person overlaps the other. Living beings eat one another's flesh. Think it over carefully: it's just people eating people.

Q6: Does a Buddhist disciple who has received the Five Precepts and the Bodhisattva Precepts have to uphold them with care and be a lifelong vegetarian?

A: Of course! What's the



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The organic farm at the City of 10,000 Buddhas

use of receiving the precepts if you are not going to keep them?

Q7: Do we have to be lifelong vegetarians after we receive the precepts? If it's inconvenient for the time being, is it okay to eat the vegetables cooked with meat?

A: If you are as sincere as the Sixth Patriarch, you may eat the vegetables in dishes that contain meat. If you haven't reached the level of the Sixth Patriarch, it's better to eat less meat.

Q8: Is it okay to eat the vegetables in dishes containing meat while attending social engagements outside?

A: No one can force you to not take poison.

Q9: Your disciple has a child who is five years old. Having witnessed a butcher kill the chickens that he saw last year, he cried bitterly and promised to never eat living beings' meat. He hasn't broke that promise yet. Master, how should I help him increase his roots of wisdom? Amitofo. Thank you for the Venerable Master's compassionate instructions.

A: He will not become a living being if he doesn't eat living beings' meat!

(Excerpt from Vajra Strikes / English translated by Bhikshuni Jin Gwang)