



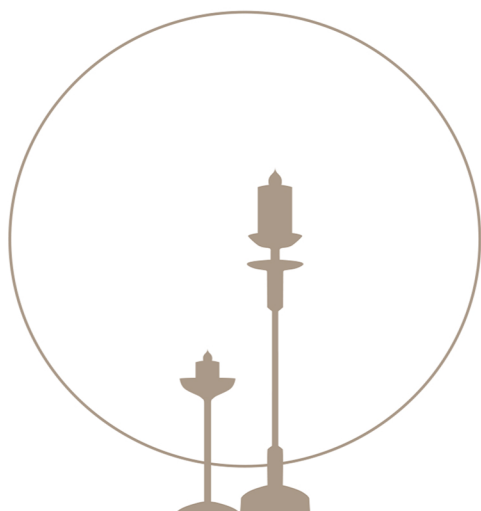
静心学堂 丛书

The Mindful Peace Academy Collection

中英双语 Chinese-English Edition

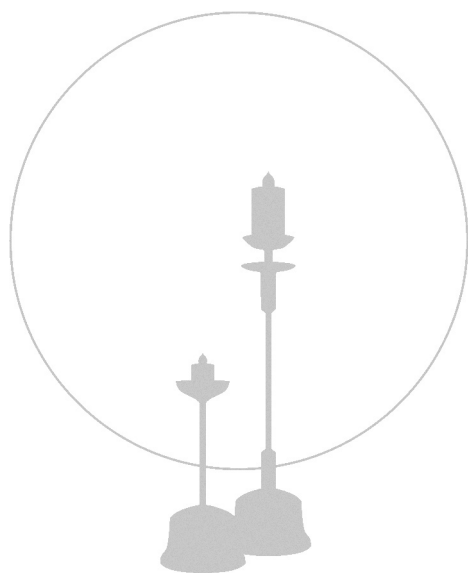
重新认识素食

Rethinking Vegetarianism



济群法师 / 著
Master Jiqun

大千出版社



【静心学堂丛书】

文化篇

人生篇

社会篇

信仰篇

实践篇



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【目 录】

一、素食的意义.....	3
1. 素食与健康.....	4
2. 素食与环保.....	5
3. 素食与时尚.....	6
4. 素食与慈悲.....	7
二、素食的五大要素.....	9
1. 自然食材.....	11
2. 营养均衡.....	11
3. 慈心烹调.....	12
4. 静心摆盘.....	14
5. 正念为食.....	15
三、静食六式.....	16
四、从素食到素生活的认识.....	20
五、素食的传播.....	23

附：素食，不仅仅是吃素

一、素食的产生.....	31
二、素食和声闻乘佛教的关系.....	35
三、素食和大乘佛教的关系.....	39
四、推广素食的意义.....	45
五、开素菜馆的辅助条件.....	51
六、如何经营素食.....	55
七、结 语.....	59

素食专项提出三个月来，项目组特别用心，开展了多轮研讨，我也和大家见过几次。今天的论坛中，云集了很多长期从事素食行业的大厨，包括推广素食的专业人士。把这件事做好，可以让更多人吃素，让更多众生免遭杀戮，所以这次的交流很有意义。

近几十年来，内地开办了不同档次的素菜馆，但多半做得比较辛苦，甚至举步维艰，似乎都是为了情怀在投入。难道素食真的没有受众吗？不能成为正常的经营项目吗？我们可以看到，在起步较早的港台地区，素食已深受大众欢迎。我过去到台湾，听说有两千多家素菜馆，香港也随处可见，且每家素菜馆的菜品琳琅满目，宾客爆满。

为什么素食难以在内地普及？究其原因，应该是大家对素食存在误解。比如觉得素食没什么可吃，觉得素食营养不足，觉得吃素者都是出于信仰，等等。当然大城市会好一点，在上海、北京、广州、深圳、厦门等地，素菜馆相对较多，也做得比较成功。可见，这和社会的开放程度有一定关系。

长期以来，中国社会处在经济发展阶段。在那些贫苦年代，三餐无非吃些蔬菜，没什么机会吃肉。人们的印象中，肉才是有营养的高级食品。所以有条件之后，自然把肉食作为首选。还有些人把吃素和信仰产生捆绑，觉得吃素是学佛人的专利，与他人无关。这些观念，使得素菜馆难以被大众接受，也难以形成一定的规模。

在这样的背景下，我们该如何推广素食？

一、素食的意义

现代人因为饮食和生活习惯的不健康
带来抑郁、焦虑等心理问题
还造成过度开发、环境污染等生态问题
甚至引发持续不断的国际冲突
如果从健康、环保的角度切入
让静心慢生活成为人人向往的时尚
就能从根本上解决问题

首先是观念的转变，一方面要消除大众对素食的误解，一方面要让大家看到素食的意义，主要体现在以下几方面。

1. 素食与健康

现在很多人富起来了，想吃什么就吃什么，想喝什么就喝什么，以为给身体注入了很多营养。其结果，却引发了各种健康问题。近几十年来，中国的糖尿病等慢性病患者数量激增，居高不下，不仅给医疗系统增加沉重的负担，也给病人和家庭带来无尽的痛苦。

古人有句话叫“病从口入”，过去，我们只是将

此理解为不干净的食物。其实从广义上说，一切对自身不适宜的食物，都是直接的致病因素。什么才是有益健康的食物？如何揭示素食与健康的关系？

我们推广素食，必须建立科学的素食观，而不是简单地把素食和健康划等号。事实上，很多素食者并不注重营养搭配，吃得也不健康，未必有说服力。所以我们要加强学习，除了佛教法义，还要关注各领域的最新研究成果，全面了解素食对健康的正向价值，以及荤食的负面作用。理论、数据和实例相结合，才会使人心悦诚服地接受。

2. 素食与环保

素食对环保的意义，也是当今世界关注的重点。众多数据表明，发展畜牧业会消耗大量水资源和农作物，造成水源紧张、粮食供应不足。其结果，就是将森林等自然资源发展为农田，进一步加剧生态失衡。此外，动物排放会污染水源和空气，产生惊人的碳排放。这方面的研究资料很多，充分说明素食对环境是

最友好的。可以说，吃素本身就是在力行环保，是成为低碳达人的首选。

3. 素食与时尚

为什么要让素食和时尚相关联？这对年轻人尤其重要。因为他们还不到关心健康的年龄，对环保也未必有多少感觉，但热衷追逐潮流。如果走传统路线，年轻人可能觉得这是上一代的食物和品味，缺乏兴趣。怎么才能吸引他们？需要将素食和餐厅打造成时尚的IP，不仅让大家吃到可口的食物，还能感受食物承载的精神内涵，空间营造的文化氛围。

现在有不少咖啡馆和餐厅成了年轻人必去的打卡地，走的正是时尚路线。包括很多产品找明星代言，也因为他们时尚的象征。而从受众来看，年轻人的心态更开放，更愿意尝试新生事物，也更容易接受不同的饮食习惯。所以我们要多方探索，让素食成为大家喜闻乐见的新时尚。

4. 素食与慈悲

从佛法修行来说，素食是慈悲的饮食，是对生命的尊重和爱护。我小时候，常在早上四五点听到有人家里杀猪，叫声极其悲惨。儒家说：“君子之于禽兽也，见其生，不忍见其死；闻其声，不忍食其肉，是以君子远庖厨也。”但不见不闻就能解决问题吗？事实上，只要把其它生命当作食物，就必然会造成杀戮，是不慈悲的表现。

进一步，又会从不爱护动物扩大为不尊重人类，是造成冲突乃至战争的根源。佛教有首为人熟知的偈颂：“千百年来碗里羹，怨深似海恨难平，欲知世上刀兵劫，但听屠门夜半声。”碗中的那些肉，不只是食物，更是无量众生的怨与恨。所以素食才是慈悲的饮食，和平的饮食。如果我们对动物心怀慈悲，自然会对身边的每个人充满慈悲。当我们彼此都能以慈悲相待，其乐融融，世界就会和平稳定。

以上几点，也是世界可持续发展的关键所在。现代人因为饮食和生活习惯的不健康，带来抑郁、焦虑等心理问题，还造成过度开发、环境污染等生态问题，

甚至引发持续不断的国际冲突。如果从健康、环保的角度切入，让静心慢生活成为人人向往的时尚，成为修习慈心的助缘，就能从根本上解决问题。我们说的这些，不是简单的口号，还要有充分的理论和数据支持。这样才能让大家确定，吃素不仅是个人的饮食习惯，还是于众生、于世界有莫大利益的选择。

二、素食的五大要素

理想素食的五大要素

一是自然食材，注重原料选择

二是营养均衡，完善食物结构

三是慈心烹调，以良好的发心制作

四是静心摆盘，以正确的用心出品

五是正念为食，让吃饭成为修行

理想素食的五大要素，一是自然食材，注重原料选择；二是营养均衡，完善食物结构；三是慈心烹调，以良好的发心制作；四是静心摆盘，以正确的用心出品；五是正念为食，让吃饭成为修行。

根据这几点，每个组从不同角度作了分享，提供了众多菜品，是我们未来制作“静心菜谱”的素材。现在关于素食的菜谱很多，从实体书到公众号都有，蒸煮煎炸，花样繁多。我们也可以学习并吸收其中的长处，但前提是围绕五大要素。因为其他菜谱往往侧重制作，缺乏指导思想，而五大要素才是“静心菜谱”的特色和高度所在。

1. 自然食材

选择自然食材，不仅要关注食材本身，还要关注它的来源，包括食材的种植和生产。近年来，媒体曝光了很多违规制作食品的黑心厂家，让人特别担心，不知自己吃的食物中到底有些什么，会给健康带来什么隐患。一方面，食物造成的危害往往是不可逆的；另一方面，食物包含的有害成分往往难以辨别。怎样才能保障食品安全？必须从源头抓起，包括蔬菜的种植，酱油、醋等调料的加工，香菇、木耳、腐竹等山珍和各类半成品的生产制作。希望未来有人发心去做，我们吃的就由这些地方供应。当然也不是所有都得自己做，还可以寻找靠得住的供应商，确保食材是自然且有益健康的。

2. 营养均衡

说到营养，不少学佛者觉得身体是个臭皮囊，随便吃点就行，无须讲究。好在过去的人内心清净，修行得力，这么做也问题不大。但现代人工作那么忙，

那么辛苦，如果营养长期跟不上，就会影响健康，不仅给自身的修行和生活造成障碍，也会使大众对素食甚至学佛产生负面印象。所以品种的多样性很重要，既保证营养均衡，也兼顾口味需求。

这就需要专门的营养师提供支持，根据身体所需安排膳食，确保每天摄入基本的维生素、矿物质和微量元素。此外，还可根据常见的现代病，如三高、肿瘤、心脑血管疾病等，有针对性地选择食物。中国历来有“药补不如食补”的传统，现代研究也认为，食物是最好的药。了解食物特性，就可以在满足常规营养的基础上，结合不同人的身体状况，从日常生活加以预防。就像艾灸中，既有几个通用的养生穴，也有针对性的治病穴位。

3. 慈心烹调

在烹调素食的过程中，我们要带着慈心和利他心，希望每个吃到的人都能健康、幸福，最终走向觉醒，成就佛道。基于这样的发心，就能让做菜成为慈心的

修行。愿心看似无形，其实大有力量。现代量子力学告诉我们，物质以什么方式存在是不确定的，经由人的认识才被确定。可见，意念对物质的存在有很大影响。这也是唯识讲的，我们认识的世界没有离开我们的认识。从这个意义上说，带着一份慈心烹调，就能让这份菜品散发慈心。受用者也会感受到这份慈心，甚至能增长慈心。

慈心不仅体现于发心，还体现于烹调过程中的用心。比如合理搭配食材，采用符合食物本味的烹调方式，适度使用调料增鲜提香。传统素食往往为了迎合口腹之欲，弥补食材的清淡，一味多油、多盐、多糖。有些仿荤半成品更是大量使用添加剂，反而让素食成了健康杀手，是极大的误区。好在目前大家已逐步认识到其中危害，也在尝试调整。

还要注意的是，怎么在注重健康的前提下，把菜做得吸引人。对很多人来说，好吃才是硬道理。如果只想着健康，不考虑口味，是难以让大众接受的。佛教强调中道，制作素食也是同样，需要把健康和美味统一起来，而不是偏执一端。

4. 静心摆盘

摆盘是正念修行的过程，要带着正念和利他心来做，借助这些呈现，让素食展现不俗的品味，让大家不仅从味道上，也从视觉、感受等方面爱上吃素。就像青菜在路边摊卖三块，到五星级宾馆卖几十块，再高档点，可能升级为上百块。从菜的味道来说，差别未必有那么大，但后者还包含了从器具、摆盘到环境、服务等一系列附加值，以此满足顾客不同层次的需求。

从推广素食来说，我们也要兼顾这一点。但我们不是为了卖得更贵，而是呈现素食的多样化和可能性。让大家知道，素食并不是简单地吃几个蔬菜，同样可以在色、香、味、形各方面做到极致，丰俭由人，各取所需。

静心，还体现在清净的禅意氛围。如果场所很安静，来此享用食物的人也会感到安静。就像大家进入别院打造的环境中，心很容易静下来。在喧闹的现代社会的，安静是极为难得的体验。所以第四点不仅在于摆盘，还要营造一个场。现代企业讲究人货场，希望未来的素菜馆，都能成为都市人的心灵家园，帮助他

们安身养心。如果做到这样，就会产生粘性，让人们愿意一来再来。反之，仅仅是吃东西，其实在哪里都能吃，但场的调性是难以复制且不可替代的。

5. 正念为食

我们现在倡导的静茶七式，让泡茶到喝茶都成为禅修。禅是一种生活智慧，不仅体现于茶，还体现于生活中的吃饭、穿衣、待人接物。我们斋堂挂的“正念为食”，就是提醒大家，要带着觉知，专注当下，让吃饭成为修行。

以上，是我们未来推广素食的五大要素，依此打造“静心素食”，建设相关产业。其中涉及食材生产、营养搭配、烹调摆盘、空间打造等方方面面，需要大家深入研讨，也需要专业人士的传帮带。吃饭是生活中的大事，吃得健康，吃得欢喜，是每个人的刚需。以此为切入点，可以引导人们建立健康生活，拥有健康身心，同时成为走向觉醒的方便。就像静茶七式那样，成为静心慢生活的重要组成部分。

三、静食六式

素食五大要素
是编写菜谱、营造空间的指导
而静食六式重点在日常运用
从备菜、烹调、摆盘到吃饭
有较为完整的呈现
未来可以大力推广
将修行真正落实到生活中

静食六式中，一是用心备菜，二是慈心烹调，三是静心摆盘，四是正念为食，五是感恩离座，六是本来空。其中有三式，和素食五大要素相同。不同在于，静食六式包含了准备、烹调到吃饭的完整过程，更侧重正念在日常饮食中的运用。

第一是用心备菜，重点落实为慈心和正念。首先以慈心为基础，然后带着利他心、恭敬心、供养心、欢喜心去做。希望我们准备的菜品能给他人带去利益，让他们的身心得到滋养。其次要带着正念，在备菜过程中专注当下，保持觉知。这样的话，备菜既是慈心的修行，又是正念的修行。

第二慈心烹调和第三静心摆盘，与前面所说的用

心一样。首先是生起慈心，然后带着利他心、恭敬心、供养心、欢喜心去做。

第四是正念为食。首先，带着什么样的发心而吃，佛教的食存五观就是提醒我们：到底为什么而吃？为了贪嗔痴而吃，还是为了觉醒解脱？我们要借助这个色身成就道业，所以通过吃饭来滋养它，目的是为了觉醒解脱，利益众生，而不是为了满足贪嗔痴。其次，在进食过程中保有正念，“防心离过，贪等为宗旨”，学会带着正念去吃。

第五是感恩离座。吃完后，带着深深的感恩心，感恩生产食物的农民、工人及所有相关人员。我们吃到的每一份食物背后，都有无数人的辛勤劳动，没有他们的付出，我们怎么能吃到这些食物呢？然后带着感恩心离座。

第六是本来空。空是提醒我们不执著，以平常心受用食物，吃到合口味的不贪著，吃到不合口味的不抱怨。事实上，食物是特别容易引发贪嗔的对境。因为我们已经习惯对食物心生分别，这就必须特别关注，以免自己在不知不觉中落入串习。

素食五大要素是我们编写菜谱、营造空间的指导思想，而静食六式重点在日常运用，从备菜、烹调、摆盘到吃饭，有较为完整的呈现。未来可以像静茶七式那样大力推广，将修行真正落实到生活中。

四、从素食到素生活的认识

从素食出发
进一步推广素生活
建立相应的生活方式
使之成为人人向往的新生活
这对人类身心健康
和地球持续发展意义重大

我们不仅要倡导素食，还要倡导素生活的理念。可以说，素生活就是素食的延伸。有了素生活，素食才能得到有效推广。佛教说，素食有三德六味。根据现代人的特点，我们总结了素食五德，即自然、朴素、健康、静心、和谐的精神内涵。

第一是自然，选择自然而非深加工的食物。

第二是朴素，返璞归真，建立简朴而非奢华的生活方式。

第三是健康，包括身体、心理和生态环境的健康，让人们拥有健康的身心，让世界拥有健康的生态。

第四是静心，现代人往往身心焦躁，通过素食和素生活，可以帮助人们以饮食安身，以修行安心。

第五是和谐，从个人身与心的和谐，到人与人的和谐，再到人与环境的和谐。

这就需要从素食出发，进一步推广素生活，从空间打造、器物选择、氛围营造等方面，建立相应的生活方式。未来，我们要将此形成标准，在国内外推广倡导，使之成为人人向往的新生活，这对人类身心健康和地球持续发展意义重大。立足于此，素食就会成为人们必然的选择。因为我们不仅是为了自己吃素，也是为了众生吃素，为了子孙后代吃素。

五、素食的传播

相信在后疫情时代
素食和素生活
将成为人们的心之所向
当大家身处禅意空间
感到吃饭可以满足
身体和精神的双重需要
还会不来吗

怎么在现代社会传播素食？是我们面临的重要课题，需要有一批人投入精力、财力、物力去做。其中不仅要有做素食的大厨，还要有空间设计、生活美学等相关从业者，为倡导素生活提供全方位的服务和指导。

参与者要对这种生活方式充满信心，相信在后疫情时代，素食和素生活将成为人们的心之所向，引领未来潮流。建立这种认知，认识这份倡导的意义后，还要投身其中，做出一批样板空间，作为素生活体验馆。当大家身处禅意空间，感到吃饭可以满足身体和精神的双重需要，还会不来吗？

我们的人文空间，也可以成为落实素生活的道场。

在这里，不只是读读书，还可以品尝健康食品。再结合静茶七式、禅修体验，可以满足人们不同层面的需求，全方位地安顿身心。

立足于此，我们还要形成一定的品牌效应。为什么麦当劳、肯德基能把鸡腿、薯条卖到全世界？就是形成了标准化、模式化的操作，店家知道自己该做什么，顾客知道自己能买到什么。所以我们也要依五大要素形成素食标准，保证出品质量，让人吃得安心。现代人习惯点外卖，未来如果有人为这些群体做好素食简餐，应该也有很大的市场。

在此基础上，可以进一步通过公众号、直播等现代媒体，倡导这种新生活。我们有思想高度，有理论指导，如果加上好的内容，系统性地推广传播，真是自利利他，造福社会。





素食，不仅仅是吃素

Vegetarianism,
Beyond a Dietary Habit

2011年讲于厦门国际素食论坛

说到素食，和佛教的关系非常密切。在中国，传统的素食者多半是出于信仰作出这一选择。中国佛教协会曾对僧人有过生活上的要求，即“素食、独身、僧装”。从中，可以看出汉传佛教对素食的重视程度。但在南传和藏传佛教中，却没有相关规定。这是为什么呢？因为南传继承原始佛教的传统，托钵乞食，施主给什么就吃什么，对饮食没有特别禁忌。至于藏传，虽和汉传同属大乘佛教，理应素食，但藏地气候寒冷，少有蔬菜，也没有形成素食的习惯。

到了今天，随着三大语系佛教相互交流的深入，随着交通和生活条件的极大改善，有不少南传和藏传的大德开始提倡素食。因为素食不仅代表一种饮食习

惯，更是源自佛教慈悲精神的一种修行。所以，素食虽是汉传佛教特有的生活方式，但它的影响正在不断扩大。

与此同时，随着人们对动物福利和环境保护意识的增强，以及对健康、营养等问题的重新认识，还有不少人因为宗教以外的原因选择了素食，其中不乏文体明星和各界知名人士。可以说，素食正在呈现世界化的流行趋势。

一、素食的产生

若佛子故食肉
一切肉不得食
断大慈悲性种子
一切众生见而舍去
是故一切菩萨
不得食一切众生肉

虽然素食是汉传佛教特有的传统，但这一选择并非独出心裁，而是以大乘经教为依据的。佛教在西汉哀帝时传入中国，当时来华的印度僧人并未严格吃素，汉地自然也没有素食之风。直到梁武帝时期，经过他的大力倡导，素食才成为僧人必须遵循的行为规范。

梁武帝是一位虔诚的佛教徒，精通教义，经常搭上缁衣为王公大臣们说法，甚至几度入寺，舍身为奴。国不可一日无君，所以朝廷只能以重金将皇帝赎回，僧团因此积累了大量财富，广修道场。“南朝四百八十寺，多少楼台烟雨中”，就是这一时期的写照。

梁武帝在研读经典过程中发现，大乘经典明确提

出，佛子应断除肉食。如佛陀在《涅槃经》中说：“善男子，从今日始，不听声闻弟子食肉。若受檀越信施之时，应观是食如子肉想。”为什么要这样做呢？佛陀接着告诉我们：“夫食肉者，断大慈种……其食肉者，若行、若住、若坐、若卧，一切众生闻其肉气，悉生恐怖。譬如有人近狮子已，众人见之，闻狮子臭，亦生恐怖。”作为大乘佛子，在成就智慧的同时，还要成就慈悲。而食肉会令众生心生恐惧，不敢接近，有违慈悲的修行。

在《楞伽经》中，佛陀也告诉我们：“夫食肉者，有无量过，诸菩萨摩訶萨修大慈悲，不得食肉。”接着，佛陀进一步阐述了肉食的过患和素食的功德：“贪著肉味，更相杀害，远离贤圣，受生死苦；舍肉味者，闻正法味，于菩萨地如实修行，速得阿耨多罗三藐三菩提。”

此外，本生故事还记载了佛陀在因地为救助众生不惜舍身的种种壮举，比如我们熟悉的割肉喂鹰、舍身饲虎等。作为大乘学子，我们要闻佛所言，学佛所行，如果做不到舍己救人，反而为贪口腹之欲以众生

为食，不觉得太惭愧了吗？

除了经典依据，“梵网菩萨戒”明确规定：“若佛子故食肉，一切肉不得食，断大慈悲性种子，一切众生见而舍去。是故一切菩萨不得食一切众生肉，食肉得无量罪，若故食者，犯轻垢罪。”禁止肉食的原因就在于，吃众生肉会影响慈悲的修行，令众生对你心怀恐惧。菩萨要摄受众生，令众生欢喜，令众生乐于亲近，如果使他们感到恐惧，就不能与之广结善缘，进一步度化他们。

是以，梁武帝根据这些大乘经律撰写了《断酒肉文》，劝勉四众弟子勿饮酒食肉，并明令出家众必须戒除酒肉：“若食肉者，障菩提心，无菩萨法，无四无量心，无大慈大悲。以是因缘，佛子不续。”

因为梁武帝的大力倡导，汉传佛教开始形成素食的传统，并延续至今。

二、素食和声闻乘佛教的关系

虽然声闻戒允许吃三净肉
但事实上，只要有人消费
就会出现相关从业人员
就会有动物因此遭到杀戮
即使不是直接为你而杀
也是间接为你而杀
追溯起来，还是难辞其咎

佛教有声闻乘和菩萨乘之分，亦称小乘和大乘。为什么会有大小之别？其实，两者都是以解脱为目标，即解脱生命内在的无明、迷惑和烦恼。区别只是在于，追求个人解脱还是带领一切众生走向解脱。如果你的目标只是希望个人解脱，那是声闻乘的发心，是为小；如果你的目标不仅在于个人解脱，也希望带领一切众生走向解脱，那是菩萨乘的发心，是为大。

根据不同的发心，又形成了相应的戒律。声闻戒主要偏向止恶，比如五戒，为不杀生、不偷盗、不邪淫、不妄语、不饮酒。每条戒相之前都有一个“不”字，告诉我们不可以做什么。五戒如此，八戒、沙弥戒和比丘戒同样如此。其重点在于对恶的否定，要我

们积极阻止自身的不善行为，亦称止持，通过止息某种行为来持戒。

五戒中的前四条为性戒，即行为本身就是不善的，是需要禁止的，这也是出家戒的四条根本重罪。可见，不杀生是声闻戒的重要内容。或许有人感到疑惑，前面不是说过南传佛教不禁肉食吗？须知这是有前提的，唯有三净肉才允许吃。

所谓三净肉，即不见、不闻、不疑。不见，是没有亲眼看到这个动物被杀；不闻，是没有听到这个动物被杀；不疑，没有任何迹象表明这个动物是为你而杀。具备这三个条件，属于可食用的净肉。反之，就涉及杀生范畴，是不能食用的。

虽然声闻戒允许吃三净肉，但事实上，只要有人消费，就会出现相关从业人员，就会有动物因此遭到杀戮。即使不是直接为你而杀，也是间接为你而杀，追溯起来，还是难辞其咎。如果对肉食消费得少，乃至完全不消费，那么从业者自然随之减少，很多动物就可以摆脱被屠宰、割截的厄运。

当然，在传统乞食制度下，几乎没什么选择空间，

所以不禁肉食是可以理解的。但我们要知道，如果有条件吃素，才是究竟的不杀生，才能更好体现佛教的慈悲精神。

三、素食和大乘佛教的关系

在大乘佛教中
任何一个法门都离不开菩提心
离不开慈悲的修行
而素食正是一种慈悲的修行
只要做出这个选择
不必多花时间
就可以日日修、月月修、年年修

汉传佛教属于大乘，但从目前来看，并未彰显大乘积极利他的精神，反而给予大众消极、出世的印象。因为多数佛教徒关心的都是自己，念佛人想赶快往生极乐，修禅者想赶快了脱生死，很少想着如何让更多人走向解脱。所以说，社会对佛教的误解并非空穴来风，在很大程度上，和我们自身的所作所为有关。

原因何在？就是因为我们对大乘不共声闻的精神认识不足，实践不足。这个不共的精神，就是菩提心。作为大乘佛子，我们要不断告诫自己：不仅自己要走向觉醒，也要帮助一切众生走向觉醒，以此作为尽未来际的生命目标。唯有建立这样的愿望，才是菩萨行者。否则，不论学了多少大乘经典，都不能算合格的

大乘佛子。如果说皈依三宝代表我们对信仰的选择，那么发菩提心就标志着我们已跻身大乘行列。

在汉传佛教地区，不少人热衷受菩萨戒，但往往只是作为一种走过场的形式。却不知道，菩萨戒的关键是菩提心，如果不曾发起菩提心，这种所谓的“菩萨”是不合格的，有名无实的。发起菩提心之后，还要进一步受持菩萨戒，遵循菩萨的行为准则。所以，受菩萨戒并不意味着我们有了更高的“级别”，而是意味着我们对自己有了更高的要求。

菩萨戒和声闻戒的不同在于，声闻戒偏向止恶，而菩萨戒包括止恶、行善、利益众生三个方面，分别为摄律仪戒、摄善法戒、饶益有情戒。也就是说，作为菩萨行者，不止恶是犯戒的，不行善是犯戒的，有机会帮助众生却不闻不问也是犯戒的。

为什么呢？因为菩提心代表崇高的利他主义愿望，也代表觉醒的心。我们知道，成佛是成就生命的觉醒。发菩提心，就是以佛陀为目标，发愿成为像佛陀那样的觉者。那么，成为觉者和利益众生到底有什么关系呢？凡夫处处以自我为中心，因此陷入我执，

迷失自己。当我们将生命重心从自己转向他人，就能弱化我执，明心见性。所以利他不仅能成就慈悲，也能成就内在的觉醒。

在大乘佛教中，任何一个法门都离不开菩提心，离不开慈悲的修行，而素食正是一种慈悲的修行。只要做出这个选择，不必多花精力，就可以日日修、月月修、年年修。儒家说：“己所不欲，勿施于人。”每个人都渴望生存而害怕死亡，因为自己会感到害怕，就要将心比心，不再把这种恐惧带给其他众生，而是给他们以关怀，以慈悲。

所谓慈悲，慈是与乐，悲是拔苦。一方面是创造条件，使众生获得快乐；一方面是施以援手，将众生从痛苦深渊中拯救出来。从发起菩提心的那一刻起，我们就要坚持不懈地拔苦与乐，最终成就佛菩萨那样的大慈大悲。

这种大是有标准的，那就是对任何众生都能生起平等无别的慈悲。如果还有一个众生是你不愿慈悲的，就说明慈悲的修行尚未圆满。如何将我们现前的、充满分别而微不足道的慈悲扩大到无限？佛教中有四无

量心的修行，就是将“慈悲喜舍”四种心逐渐扩大至无量，具体内容是：“愿一切众生永具安乐及安乐因（慈）；愿一切众生永离众苦及众苦因（悲）；愿一切众生永具无苦之乐，身心愉悦（喜）；愿一切众生远离贪嗔之心，住平等舍（舍）。”

如果觉得四无量心的修习不够具体，可以多听听南传佛教的《慈经》，在听的过程中随文入观，把经中所说的每句话变成自己的愿望：愿我远离痛苦，愿我的父母远离痛苦，愿我的朋友远离痛苦，乃至愿天下所有人远离痛苦。这种思维需要不断重复，不断熏习，每天这样告诫自己，慈悲的力量就会随之增长。

在佛教中，慈悲心是作为菩提心的生起之因。有了慈悲心，才会真诚地利益大众。反过来，菩提心又是慈悲心的圆满之因，有了菩提心，才能使有限的慈悲扩大为无限。

《普贤行愿品》说：“一切众生而为树根，诸佛菩萨而为华果，以大悲水饶益众生，则能成就诸佛菩萨智慧华果。”告诉我们：佛菩萨所成就的菩提之果，离不开众生这个土壤。唯有在利益众生的过程中，

慈悲心才能不断增长，乃至圆满。而从世间法来说，慈悲心增长了，福报就会增加，事业就会顺利，众生就会越来越喜欢我们。所以说，慈悲心是人生最大的财富。

大乘佛教之所以禁止肉食，就是因为重视慈悲的修行。不仅自己要走向解脱，还要和一切众生广结善缘。如果伤害众生，以众生为食，何以度化他们？所以素食和大乘精神是完全吻合的，是培养慈悲的直接途径，也是对大乘精神的切身实践。

四、推广素食的意义

民众对素食有种种误解和偏见
总以为吃素会导致营养不良
或以为吃素是生活窘迫的无奈选择
这些观念严重阻碍了素食的推广
其实，近代的种种研究表明
不论从人体的生理结构
还是蔬果的营养成分来说
素食远比肉食更适合人类
更有益身心健康

素食的目的，是为了帮助我们戒除杀心和嗔心。佛教有一部《十善业道经》，其中讲到戒杀的十大利益：“若离杀生，即得成就十离恼法。何等为十？一、于诸众生普施无畏；二、常于众生起大慈心；三、永断一切嗔恚习气；四、身常无病；五、寿命长远；六、恒为非人之所守护；七、常无噩梦，寢觉快乐；八、灭除怨结，众怨自解；九、无恶道怖；十、命终生天。是为十。若能回向阿耨多罗三藐三菩提者，后成佛时，得佛随心自在寿命。”

首先，一个没有杀心的人，任何人都不会害怕你，这是对众生普遍给予无畏施。第二，有利于慈悲心的生起，因为不忍，所以不杀，内心常怀柔软。第三，

可以永远消除内在的仇恨心理，所谓仁者无敌，当世间再没有人与你为敌，又需要去恨谁、恼谁呢？第四，使我们身体健康，远离病痛。因为除四大不调外，很多疾病都和伤害众生感得的恶业有关。第五，因为你没有使众生早早夭折，所以能感得长寿的果报。第六，不论走到哪里，都有很多护法在保护你。第七，因为不伤害众生，所以也不用担心被伤害，不会被恶梦缠绕。第八，不结冤仇，即使以往结下的冤仇也会因此化解。第九，不必担心将来堕落恶道。第十，命终之后，可以因这一善业得生天道。

在十大利益中，包括了生理健康和心理健康两方面。健康是现代人最关心的热点，我曾接受过关于健康主题的采访，我给他们提供了一句话：“身体健康是人生最大的财富，修心养性是人生最有价值的工作。”现代社会，虽然物质条件有了极大改善，但国人的幸福感普遍不高。不仅如此，心理疾病患者正在日益增多。根源何在？我觉得，在很大程度上和人们的生活方式有关。

科技的发达，商业的繁荣，为我们带来了一种貌

似丰富、实则混乱的生活。我们每天都要面对无数选择，经受种种诱惑，所以多数人都是活在一种躁动和混乱中，无法自控。现代人其实挺可怜，很多人甚至丧失了休息的能力，每天不停地忙碌着，忙着工作，忙着家庭，忙着娱乐。这种忙碌已形成强大的串习，根本无法让自己静下来。而且，这一生活方式多是以牺牲身心健康为代价的。这种代价是如此沉重，往往在我们发现时，就已覆水难收。

这种生活不仅使我们的身心混乱不堪，也使生态环境受到毁灭性的破坏。我们今天讲环保，不是种几棵树或是做一场宣传就能解决问题的。关键在于，我们的生活方式就与环保背道而驰。如果不改变这种现状，所谓的环保，只能是亡羊补牢式的被动追赶，根本无法遏制环境的继续恶化。

很多时候，我们虽在说着环保，但依然过着极不环保的生活。这种生活正是构成身心疲惫和环境恶化的关键所在。说到这个问题，使我想到佛教的戒律。为什么修行要从持戒开始？就是帮助我们建立一种健康而有益身心的生活方式，使我们拥有宁静平和的心

态，然后就能进一步修定发慧。修行如此，生活也是如此。有了健康的生活方式，才会有健康的身心，才不会对环境构成太大破坏。

素食，就是一种健康的生活方式。在中国，民众对素食有种种误解和偏见，总以为吃素会导致营养不良，或以为吃素是生活窘迫的无奈选择，等等，这些观念严重阻碍了素食的推广。其实，近代的种种研究表明，不论从人体的生理结构，还是蔬果的营养成分来说，素食远比肉食更适合人类，更有益身心健康。相关资料网上很多，不再一一细说。

从环保的角度来说，素食也是拯救环境危机的不二选择。诸多研究表明，养殖业的大规模发展，是导致气候变暖的最大元凶。造成全球温室效应的气体排放，有两成来自养殖业，超过世界所有交通工具的排放量。同时，养殖业还消耗了大量土地和水资源。查阅一下相关数据，相信大家会感到震惊。如果不加以改变，我们每天的生活就是在破坏地球，让世界末日提前到来。

所以说，素食不仅有助于自己的身心健康，也有

利于全球的环境保护，是一种文明、健康、时尚的生活方式。事实上，这种生活方式正在成为更多有识之士的理性选择。

五、开素菜馆的辅助条件

首先，要有正确的发心

其次，营造祥和的氛围

第三，把素菜馆作为传播文化的场所

第四，重视素食的宣传

第五，组织一些环保和慈善活动

第六，条件成熟时定期举办读书沙龙

怎样才能开好一个素菜馆？

首先，要有正确的发心，不要简单把它当作一个提供菜品的地方，要发心让大家因为走进素菜馆而有所收获。因为素食是在长养慈悲之因，如果有人因此对众生心生慈悲，对未来人生将大有利益。此外，素食代表健康、环保的饮食，推广素食就是在推广健康，推广环保。以这样的发心去做，自然会得到大众的拥护，使双方共同受益。

其次，营造祥和的氛围。作为素菜馆的员工，应该有不同于普通服务员的精神面貌。可以让他们学习一些佛教礼仪，同时增加一些佛教方面的修行。不少餐馆都有早会，素菜馆的早会，可以让员工在一起听

听《慈经》，念念五戒和四无量心，使他们具有调柔宁静的形象，慈悲祥和的气质，让顾客来了之后感受到与众不同的气息。

第三，把素菜馆作为传播佛教文化的场所，可以设立阅览区，提供一些通俗易懂的法宝，供阅览或结缘。除正常营业时间外，还可以适当做些开放阅览，既能与人方便，又能增加素菜馆的人气。从另一个角度说，如果有更多的人认同佛教，就会有更多的人戒杀吃素，可以增加潜在的客户群。

第四，重视素食的宣传。编印一些关于素食利益的小册子，图文并茂，让更多的人认识到：为什么要吃素，吃素有哪些好处，怎样吃素才能吃得健康、吃出美味。只要以大众喜闻乐见的形式呈现，就能起到润物细无声的作用。一个人只有在观念上接受了素食，才乐意经常走进素菜馆，而不是偶尔体验一下。

第五，组织一些环保和慈善方面的活动。素食者多半比较有爱心，关心公益，依托素菜馆举办相关活动，一方面可以利益大众，一方面可以扩大素菜馆的影响，增加自身凝聚力。

第六，条件成熟时可以定期举办一些读书沙龙，或关于佛学及文化、艺术、养身方面的讲座，形成一个固定的群体。

如果把这几方面做好，就不只是在提供饮食，而是在推广一种文化，推广健康生活的理念。以这样的发心开素菜馆，和单纯为利益而做完全是两个概念。从另一个角度来说，只要有真诚利他的心，一定会得到大家的认同，得到更多的护持。

六、如何经营素食

- 第一，注重空间的营造
- 第二，注重食品的健康
- 第三，注重原料的特色
- 第四，注重制作的艺术
- 第五，注重不同的需求

当然，仅有发心还不够，因为人们来素菜馆毕竟是为了吃饭。所以，还要在空间布置和食物品质上下足功夫。我提供几点个人想法，供大家参考。

第一，注重空间的营造，有禅意而不必太宗教化，否则可能会把非佛教徒拒之门外。所谓禅意空间，就是能传达一种宁静、空灵的气息，使顾客在吃素的同时，得到精神享受。现代人越来越讲究品位，吃饭更注重的是感觉，吃什么反倒退居其次。如果有一个令人留恋的空间，将成为人们选择这家餐厅的重要因素。这就是佛教所说的“触食”——使身心感到愉悦的“食物”。

第二，注重食品的健康。在中国，食品安全是个

人人关心的大问题。很多时候，我们不知道所吃的食物中包含多少有害物质。作为素菜馆，应该尽量提供绿色食品。让大家相信，在这里吃到的既有益健康，又绝对安全。建立起这个信誉，将成为素菜馆的一个亮点。

第三，注重原料的特色。吸收天南地北的特产，包括世界各地的食材，让大家感到，吃素并不是简单的青菜豆腐，而是一件既饱口福又长见识的事，是一件充满乐趣的事。

第四，注重制作的艺术。素菜制作不仅要讲究色香味，还要给人以美感，从菜品本身到装盘、造型都要相得益彰，赏心悦目。使顾客在品味美食的同时，感受到其中独一无二的用心。

第五，注重不同的需求。偶尔吃素和经常吃素的群体，对食物和消费会有不同诉求。作为素菜馆，应该尽量兼顾这些需求，一方面让人吃得好，吃得难忘；一方面又让人吃得起，愿意常常来吃。只有这样，才能使素食真正走进大众，走进生活，成为人们长期而不是偶尔的选择。

如果能从这几方面去经营素菜馆，做出自身特色，素食才有希望引起大众的关注，甚至成为社会的主流饮食。这就需要大家共同努力。

七、结 语

随着大众对素食认知的提高
对健康饮食的向往
对低碳生活的响应
这一饮食习惯
将受到越来越多的认同和尊重
作为素食行业的从业者
是可以大有作为的

科学家爱因斯坦曾经说过：“没有什么能够比素食更能改善人的健康和增加人在地球上的生存机会了。一个只关心自己并视周围其他生灵毫无意义的人，其生活不会健康和快乐。”文学家梭罗也曾说过：“相信在今后人类不断进化的过程中，必定会逐渐弃绝食肉的恶习。”

目前，从亚洲到欧美，素食者正在日益增长。随着大众对素食认知的提高，对健康饮食的向往，对低碳生活的响应，这一饮食习惯将受到越来越多的认同和尊重。作为素食行业的从业者，你们选择的是一个朝阳产业，是可以大有作为的。希望大家能够发大心、用足心，让更多的人因此认识素食，选择素食；让更多的人因此戒杀护生，自利利他。



RETHINKING VEGETARIANISM

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Contents

I	The Significance of Vegetarianism	68
	1. Vegetarianism and Health	68
	2. Vegetarianism and Environmental Protection	70
	3. Vegetarianism and Fashion	71
	4. Vegetarianism and Compassion	72
II	The Five Key Elements of an Ideal Vegetarian Diet	75
	1. Natural Ingredients	76
	2. Nutritional Balance	77
	3. Loving-Kindness Cooking	79
	4. Mindful Plating	81
	5. Mindful Eating	83
III	Six Steps of Mindful Eating	85
IV	From Vegetarianism to Vegetarian Living	90
V	Promoting Vegetarianism	93

	Appendix: Vegetarianism, Beyond a Dietary Habit	96
I	The History of Vegetarianism	101
II	The Relationship Between Vegetarianism and the Sravaka Vehicle Buddhism	107
III	The Relationship Between Vegetarianism and Mahayana Buddhism	111
IV	Why Promote Vegetarianism	119
V	Supporting Conditions for Opening a Vegetarian Restaurant	126
VI	How to Operate a Vegetarian Restaurant	130
VII	Conclusion	134

Since the vegetarian initiative was launched three months ago, the project team has worked with great dedication, conducting multiple rounds of discussions. I have also met with the team several times. Today's forum marks another important step in this effort. It brings together many veteran chefs from the vegetarian industry, as well as professionals dedicated to promoting vegetarianism. If we can do this well, we can inspire more people to adopt a vegetarian diet and spare countless animals from slaughter. Therefore, this exchange of ideas is truly meaningful.

Over the past few decades, vegetarian restaurants of various levels have opened in mainland China. Yet most are struggling simply to survive, their efforts sustained solely by heartfelt idealism. This raises important questions: Does vegetarian food really have no market? Why can't it become a viable business? However, we can see that in regions like Hong Kong and Taiwan, where vegetarianism started earlier, it has already gained widespread popularity. During my visits to Taiwan, I learned that there were over 2,000 vegetarian restaurants. In Hong Kong, vegetarian restaurants are everywhere. They often offer an impressive variety of dishes and are packed with customers.

Why isn't vegetarianism popular in mainland China? It is largely due to common misconceptions about vegetarian food. For example, some believe that it lacks variety and nutrition, or that it's meant only for the religious. Of course, the situation is slightly better in major cities like Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Xiamen, where vegetarian restaurants are

relatively more common and successful. This shows that the acceptance of vegetarian food is related to social openness.

For a long time, China has been dedicated to developing its economy. During times of poverty and hardship, people mostly ate vegetables, with few opportunities to eat meat. This gave people the impression that meat is a more nutritious and higher-quality food. Therefore, when living conditions improved, meat naturally became the preferred choice. Additionally, some people link vegetarianism with religious beliefs, thinking it is exclusive to Buddhists and irrelevant to others. These misunderstandings prevent people from embracing vegetarian restaurants, making it difficult for them to expand.

In this context, how can we promote vegetarianism?

I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VEGETARIANISM

First, we need to transform people's views. On the one hand, we need to guide the public to clear away the misconceptions about vegetarianism; on the other hand, we need to help people understand its deeper significance, which is reflected in the following aspects.

1. Vegetarianism and Health

Today, as many people have become more affluent, they eat and drink as they please, believing it nourishes the body. Yet this lifestyle has brought a range of health

problems. In recent decades, the number of people in China suffering from diabetes and other chronic illnesses has surged and remains high. This has placed great strain on the healthcare system and brought ongoing hardship to patients and their families.

There is an ancient saying: “Disease comes from what we eat.” Here, “what we eat” refers to food that is not clean or safe to eat. But in a broader sense, any food unsuitable for our body can be a direct cause of illness. Then, what is healthy food? How can we reveal the link between vegetarianism and health?

To promote vegetarianism, we must establish a scientific perspective on it, not just assume that being vegetarian equals being healthy. In fact, many vegetarians do not pay attention to nutritional balance, nor do they eat healthily, which makes their example less convincing. So we need to strengthen our learning. Along with studying Buddhist teachings, we should also pay attention to the latest research across different fields, so that we can fully

understand the health benefits of a vegetarian diet, as well as the negative effects of a meat-based diet. Only by combining theory, data, and practical examples can we convince people to accept vegetarianism.

2. Vegetarianism and Environmental Protection

The environmental benefits of vegetarianism are also a major focus in today's world. Numerous studies show that livestock farming consumes vast amounts of water and crops, leading to water shortages and insufficient food supply. As a result, the natural resources such as forests are converted into farmland, further worsening the ecological imbalance. Additionally, animal waste pollutes water and air, generating staggering carbon emissions. Research in this field clearly shows that vegetarianism is one of the most environmentally friendly choices. Thus, adopting vegetarianism itself is an act of protecting the environment and the foremost way to live a low-carbon lifestyle.

3. Vegetarianism and Fashion

Why should we link vegetarianism with fashion? Because it is particularly important for young people. At their age, they may not care much about health or environmental protection. But they are enthusiastic about following trends. If we stick to traditional approaches, they may dismiss vegetarianism as something for the older generation, and lose interest. So how can we attract them? We need to present vegetarian food and restaurants as stylish brands. This allows people not only to enjoy delicious food, but also to connect with its spiritual meaning and experience a rich cultural atmosphere.

Nowadays, many cafes and restaurants have become must-visit spots for young people, precisely because they embrace a fashionable image. Similarly, many products feature celebrity endorsements, as celebrities are seen as fashion icons. What's more, young people are more open-minded, so they are more willing to try new things and more ready to embrace different diets. That's why we

should explore diverse approaches to make vegetarianism a new trend that people are eager to follow.

4. Vegetarianism and Compassion

In Buddhist practice, vegetarianism is a practice of compassion—respecting and caring for all beings. When I was a child, I often heard the heart-wrenching cries of pigs being slaughtered around four or five a.m.. Confucianism teaches: “A virtuous person, upon seeing animals alive, cannot bear to watch them die; upon hearing their cries, cannot bear to eat their flesh. Therefore, the virtuous stay away from matters of bloodshed and killing.” But can simply avoiding the sight or sound of suffering truly solve the issue? The truth is, as long as we treat other beings as food, killing becomes inevitable, and this shows a lack of compassion.

This lack of compassion for animals can further extend to a disregard for human life, becoming a root cause of conflicts and wars. As a well-known Buddhist verse says:

“Grudges in soup for countless years, are as deep as the sea, hard to dispel; To understand the disaster of war, just listen to slaughter at midnight.” The meat in our bowls is not just food; it also carries the grudges and hatred of countless sentient beings. This is why a vegetarian diet is not only a diet of compassion but also a path to peace. When we cultivate compassion toward animals, we naturally extend this compassion to everyone around us. If we can treat one another with compassion, we will enjoy happiness and harmony, and the world will become peaceful and stable.

These reflections are also key to the sustainable development of the world. Today, unhealthy diets and lifestyles have led to widespread mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, while also causing serious ecological problems, such as overexploitation of resources, environmental pollution, and even ongoing international conflicts.

By linking vegetarianism with health and environmental

protection, we can make slow, mindful living a trend that everyone aspires to, while also turning it into a support for cultivating compassion. In this way, we can address issues at their root. Also, what we're saying isn't just a slogan—it needs to be backed by solid reasoning and data. Only then will people truly see that vegetarianism is not merely a personal dietary choice, but a decision that brings great benefits to all beings and to the world.

II

THE FIVE KEY ELEMENTS OF AN IDEAL VEGETARIAN DIET

An ideal vegetarian diet has five elements:

- (a) Natural Ingredients—carefully selecting ingredients;
- (b) Nutritional Balance—creating a well-structured diet;
- (c) Loving-Kindness Cooking—preparing the food with loving-kindness;
- (d) Mindful Plating—plating dishes mindfully with an altruistic mind;
- (e) Mindful Eating—transforming the act of eating into a practice of mindfulness.

Based on the five elements, in group discussions, each group has shared their insights from a different perspective and presented a variety of dishes, providing valuable material for our future Dhyana Vegetarian Cookbook. Today, many vegetarian cookbooks are available, in both print and digital formats, showcasing a rich variety of cooking methods, such as steaming, boiling, frying, and stir-frying. We can also learn from other cookbooks and incorporate their strengths, but everything must still be grounded in the five elements. Most cookbooks focus mainly on technique and often lack a guiding principle, while our five elements are what truly give the Dhyana Vegetarian Cookbook its uniqueness and depth.

1. Natural Ingredients

Selecting natural ingredients means paying attention not only to the ingredients themselves, but also to their origins—how they are grown and produced. In recent years, the media has exposed many cases of unethical manufacturers producing unsafe foods. This has left

people deeply worried about what is actually in the food they eat, and what the hidden health risks it may pose. On the one hand, the harm caused by food is often irreversible; on the other hand, harmful substances in food are difficult to detect. So, how can we ensure food safety? We must monitor it at the source, from the cultivation of vegetables to the processing of seasonings like soy sauce and vinegar. It should also cover the production of dried mushrooms, wood ear fungus, dried bean curd, and other semi-finished products and delicacies. I hope some will be inspired to take on this work, so that our food can be sourced from their trustworthy supply. Of course, we don't have to produce everything ourselves; we can also seek reliable suppliers to ensure that the ingredients are natural and beneficial to our health.

2. Nutritional Balance

When it comes to nutrition, some Buddhist practitioners view the body as a mere impermanent vessel and feel there is no need to pay much attention to what they eat. In the

past, when people lived more simply and had steadier spiritual focus, this caused few problems. But modern life is fast-paced and demanding. If one's nutrition falls behind for too long, health will suffer—creating obstacles to both practice and daily life, and even leading others to misunderstand vegetarianism or Buddhism. This is why variety in vegetarian food matters: it supports balanced nutrition while also meeting different tastes.

This requires the support of professional nutritionists, who can design meal plans according to the body's needs. These plans should ensure the daily intake of essential vitamins, minerals, and trace elements. Additionally, food choices can be tailored to the needs of people with common modern conditions, such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high cholesterol, tumors, and cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. In Chinese tradition, there has long been a saying: "Better to nourish with food than with medicine." Modern research supports this view, emphasizing that food is the best form of medicine. By understanding the properties of food, we

can not only meet basic nutritional needs, but also tailor diets to individual health conditions, helping prevent illness in daily life.

3. Loving-Kindness Cooking

In preparing vegetarian meals, keep loving-kindness and altruism in mind—wishing that everyone who eats the food may enjoy health, happiness, and ultimately attain awakening and Buddhahood. With such an aspiration, cooking itself becomes a practice of cultivating loving-kindness.

Though an aspiration may seem intangible, it holds great power. Modern quantum physics tells us that matter has no single fixed state—it becomes defined through observation, shaped by consciousness itself. This shows that our thoughts can deeply influence the way matter exists. This idea echoes the Yogacara teaching: the world we perceive is inseparable from our perception. In this sense, when we cook with loving-kindness, it is infused into the

food. Those who eat it can sense this kindness, and may even find loving-kindness growing within themselves.

Loving-kindness is embodied not only in our aspiration, but also in the mindset we cultivate in the cooking process. This involves thoughtfully balancing ingredients, choosing cooking methods that align with the food's natural flavor, and using seasonings in moderation to gently enhance the flavor.

However, traditional vegetarian cooking has often relied on heavy use of oil, salt, and sugar to compensate for the lightness of plant-based ingredients, and to cater for people's tastes. Some semi-finished plant-based meat contains large amounts of additives—turning a vegetarian diet into a potential health risk. This is a major misunderstanding of what a vegetarian diet is truly about. Fortunately, more people are becoming aware of this risk and making positive changes.

Also, we need to consider how to make vegetarian food

appealing while keeping health a priority. For many people, taste is what really matters. If we focus solely on health but ignore flavor, it will be difficult for the public to embrace vegetarian food. Buddhism emphasizes the Middle Way, and the same principle applies to vegetarian cooking: health and taste must be well balanced, without leaning too far to either side.

4. Mindful Plating

Plating is a form of mindfulness practice, so we should do it with mindfulness and an altruistic mind. In this way, vegetarian dishes can express a sense of refined taste. This invites people to appreciate the food not only for its flavor, but also for its visual appeal and the feelings it evokes. For example, a single bok choy may cost only a few yuan at a food stall, but dozens at a five-star hotel—and if elevated further, even hundreds. In terms of taste, the difference may not be significant. But the higher price reflects added value—from tableware and presentation to ambiance and service—created to meet the diverse needs

of diners.

When promoting vegetarianism, we should also follow this principle. However, our aim is not to make it more expensive, but to showcase the rich variety and potential of vegetarian food. We hope people can see that vegetarian food is not just a plain mix of a few vegetables—it can also excel in color, aroma, flavor, and presentation. This way, everyone can choose what suits them best—from simple to elaborate.

Mindfulness is also reflected in creating a pure, Chan-inspired atmosphere. A quiet space naturally puts diners at ease. For example, when people enter the Amrita Retreat Center, their minds can easily calm down. In today's bustling world, such moments of peace are rare.

That's why the fourth element goes beyond plating—it lies in creating a mindful space. Today, modern businesses emphasize the triad of “people, product, and place.” In the same way, we hope that future vegetarian restaurants

can become spiritual homes for urban dwellers—a place to settle both body and mind. If this is achieved, the space will naturally foster spiritual connection, encouraging people to return time after time. However, if the focus is only on food, one can eat anywhere. What truly makes a space irreplaceable is the unique atmosphere it creates—something that cannot be replicated.

5. Mindful Eating

We are now advocating the “Seven Steps of Mindful Tea,” aiming to transform the tea brewing and tea drinking into a form of Chan practice. Chan is a wisdom in life; it is embodied not only through tea, but also in daily activities, such as eating, dressing, and interacting with others. The plaque hanging in our dining hall, “Eating with Mindfulness,” reminds us to eat with awareness, stay focused in the present moment, and let eating itself become a form of cultivation.

The five essential elements outlined above serve as

guiding principles for promoting vegetarianism in the future. By building on these elements, we aim to develop “Dhyana Vegetarianism” and establish related industries. This involves many aspects, such as ingredient production, nutritional planning, cooking methods, plating, and space design. To achieve this, it entails in-depth exploration and the support of professionals.

Eating is a fundamental part of daily life. Eating healthily and joyfully is a basic human need. Starting from this point, we can guide people to build up a healthy lifestyle and nurture a healthy body and mind. At the same time, this serves as a skillful means to guide people toward awakening. Just like the “Seven Steps of Mindful Tea,” vegetarianism can become a vital part of a slow, mindful way of life.

III

SIX STEPS OF MINDFUL EATING

The “Six Steps of Mindful Eating” are:

- (a) Preparing food with loving-kindness and mindfulness;
- (b) Cooking with loving-kindness;
- (c) Plating with mindfulness;
- (d) Eating with mindfulness;
- (e) Rising from your seat with gratitude;
- (f) Realizing the nature of emptiness.

Among the six steps, steps 2, 3, and 4 are the same as those in the “Five Key Elements of an Ideal Vegetarian Diet.” The main difference lies in that the Six Steps of Mindful

Eating present a more complete process, covering preparation, cooking and eating. So it emphasizes more on integrating mindfulness into every stage of a daily meal.

Step 1: Preparing food with loving-kindness and mindfulness

This step focuses on cultivating loving-kindness and mindfulness. First, give rise to loving-kindness, and then prepare food with the mindsets of altruism, respect, a sense of offering, and joy. We hope these dishes can benefit others, and nourish their bodies and minds. Second, integrate mindfulness throughout the process—staying focused on the present moment while maintaining awareness. In this way, preparing food becomes a practice of both loving-kindness and mindfulness.

Step 2: Cooking with Loving-Kindness

Step 3: Plating with Mindfulness

The mindsets in Step 2 and 3 are the same as in Step 1: first, give rise to loving-kindness, and then carry out each action with mindsets of altruism, respect, a sense of offering, and joy.

Step 4: Eating with Mindfulness

Before eating, take a moment to reflect. In Buddhism, the Five Contemplations Before a Meal remind us: Why do we eat? Is it out of greed, aversion, and ignorance, or for the sake of awakening and liberation? In fact, the purpose of eating is to nourish the body so that it can support our spiritual practice. This practice ultimately helps us attain awakening and benefit all sentient beings, rather than indulging in greed, aversion, and ignorance. Furthermore, we must maintain mindfulness while eating. As one of the Five Contemplations says: “Preventing the mind from creating unwholesome karma driven by greed, aversion, and ignorance,” we must learn to eat with mindfulness.

Step 5: Rising from Your Seat with Gratitude

After eating, we should cultivate deep gratitude for the farmers, workers, and everyone involved in producing the food. Every meal we enjoy is the fruit of countless people's hard work. Without their efforts, how could we enjoy the food? We should leave the table with a mind full of gratitude.

Step 6: Realizing the Nature of Emptiness

“Emptiness” reminds us not to cling to the food. Instead, we should receive it with a neutral mind—not craving what tastes good, nor rejecting what doesn't. In fact, food is one of the most common triggers for greed and aversion, as we are used to judging it based on our preferences. That's why we must remain mindful, so that we don't unconsciously fall back into old habits.

The “Five Key Elements of an Ideal Vegetarian Diet” serve as guiding principles for creating recipes and designing

spaces, while the “Six Steps of Mindful Eating” focus more on practical application in daily life, covering the entire process from food preparation to cooking, plating, and eating. In the future, we aim to promote the “Six Steps of Mindful Eating,” following the example of the “Seven Steps of Mindful Tea,” so that spiritual practice is truly integrated into daily life.

IV

FROM VEGETARIANISM TO VEGETARIAN LIVING

We advocate not only vegetarianism, but also a way of living in harmony with its spirit. In fact, vegetarian living is an extension of vegetarianism. Only by embracing vegetarian living can vegetarianism be effectively promoted. Buddhism teaches that vegetarianism embodies “Three Virtues and Six Flavors.” However, considering modern lifestyles, we have summarized five virtues of vegetarianism: natural, simple, healthy, peaceful, and harmonious.

Natural: Choosing natural foods, rather than highly processed ones.

Simple: Returning to simplicity by embracing a simple lifestyle, rather than a luxurious one.

Healthy: Promoting physical, mental, and ecological well-being—nurturing healthy bodies and minds, as well as a healthy ecological environment.

Peaceful: In today's world, many people are physically and mentally restless or anxious. Through vegetarianism and vegetarian living, we can help individuals settle their bodies through mindful eating, and calm their minds through spiritual practice.

Harmonious: Vegetarianism fosters harmony within the body and mind, among individuals, and between humanity and the environment.

To put these virtues into practice, we need to extend vegetarianism into vegetarian living—designing spaces, selecting utensils, and creating a harmonious atmosphere. Looking ahead, we will establish standards for

this lifestyle and advocate it at home and abroad, so that vegetarian living becomes a new way of life people genuinely aspire to. Such a lifestyle is meaningful for both our physical and mental well-being, as well as the sustainable development of our planet. With this vision in place, vegetarianism will become a natural choice. We do so not only for ourselves, but also for all beings and for future generations.

V

PROMOTING VEGETARIANISM

How can we effectively promote vegetarianism today? This is a pressing question that calls for a group of people to invest their time and energy, financial resources, and material support. Beyond skilled vegetarian chefs, we also need professionals in space design, life aesthetics, and related fields to provide comprehensive services and guidance in fostering vegetarian living.

Those who take part in this initiative should have full confidence in this lifestyle. I believe that in the post-pandemic era, vegetarianism and vegetarian living will become people's heartfelt aspiration and leading trends

for the future. After realizing the significance of the initiative, we must take action to create model spaces that serve as the experience centers for vegetarian living. When people step into these Chan-inspired spaces, and realize that dining can nourish both body and mind, how could they not be drawn to it?

Our cultural space can also serve as a platform for embodying vegetarian living. Here, people can not only read, but also savor healthy vegetarian cuisine. Through meditative experiences, such as the Seven Steps of Mindful Tea, this space can address people's needs on different levels and provide holistic care for both body and mind.

Building on this foundation, we must establish a recognizable brand. Why are McDonald's and KFC able to sell chicken and fries across the globe? Because they have created standardized, systematic operations—storeowners know exactly what to do, and customers know exactly what they can get. Similarly, we must develop vegetarian standards based on the five essential elements, ensuring

consistent quality for diners. Nowadays, people prefer ordering takeout. If someone can provide ready-to-eat vegetarian meals tailored to these consumers, such an offering will likely open up a large market.

Furthermore, we can promote this new lifestyle through modern media platforms such as WeChat official accounts and livestreaming. With spiritual depth, theoretical guidance, and high-quality content, we can spread this lifestyle in a clear and effective way. In doing so, we not only truly benefit ourselves and others, but also contribute to the well-being of the whole society.

Appendix

VEGETARIANISM, BEYOND A DIETARY HABIT

Speech on Xiamen's International Vegetarian Forum,
2011

Vegetarianism has a close tie with Buddhism. Traditionally, in China, most vegetarians have followed a vegetarian diet out of faith. The Buddhist Association of China has established a set of rules on the Chinese monastic lifestyle, which include “vegetarianism, celibacy, and monastic robes.” This shows the importance of vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism. However, in Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism, there are no such rules. Why is that so? In fact, Theravada Buddhism preserves the traditions of Primitive Buddhism, in which monks go on alms rounds and eat whatever is offered to them. Therefore,

there are no specific dietary rules for them. As for Tibetan Buddhism, although it shares the Mahayana spirit with Chinese Buddhism and embraces the ideal of vegetarianism, the cold climate of Xizang makes vegetables scarce, rendering a fully vegetarian diet difficult to maintain.

Nowadays, as exchanges among the three major Buddhist traditions continue to grow and transportation and living conditions improve, many esteemed masters from the Theravada and Tibetan traditions have begun to advocate vegetarianism. This is because vegetarianism is not merely a dietary habit, but also a Buddhist practice of compassion. Although vegetarianism is a lifestyle unique to Chinese Buddhism, its influence is continuously expanding.

At the same time, many people are choosing vegetarianism for three main reasons: first, growing awareness of animal welfare and environmental protection; second, a renewed understanding of health and nutrition; and

third, various non-religious motivations. Notably, many well-known public figures from the cultural, athletic, and other fields have joined in. Thus, it is fair to say that vegetarianism is starting to become a global trend.

I

THE HISTORY OF VEGETARIANISM

Vegetarianism is a distinctive tradition of Chinese Buddhism, yet it was not created independently; it grew out of Mahayana Buddhist teachings. Buddhism was introduced to China during the Western Han Dynasty, under the rule of Emperor Ai. At that time, the Indian monks who came to China did not strictly adhere to a vegetarian diet, so naturally no vegetarian culture developed then. During the Liang Dynasty, under Emperor Wu's strong advocacy, vegetarianism became a mandatory code of conduct for monks.

Emperor Wu was a devout Buddhist, well-versed in

Buddhist teachings. He often shared the Dharma with his officials and nobles when he donned the precept robe. He even entered monasteries several times, offering his service. Yet, as the saying goes: “A nation cannot stand without its leader, not even for a day.” According to the Redemption System, Buddhist monasteries at that time required the monks who wished to return to lay life to pay a redemption fee. Each time Emperor Wu offered himself to a monastery, his ministers were obliged to raise funds to redeem him. As a result, the monastic community accumulated significant wealth to build many temples. This flourishing Buddhist era was later captured in a famous poem: “Hundreds of temples, built in the Southern Dynasties, are still standing, enveloped in misty rain.”

While studying the sutras, Emperor Wu discovered that the Mahayana texts clearly stated that Buddhist practitioners should refrain from eating meat. As quoted in the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, the Buddha said: “Good man, from this day onward, I do not wish my Sravaka disciples to eat meat. Even if alms are offered, one should regard

such food as if it were the flesh of one's own child."

Why shall we practice like this? The Buddha continued to explain: "Those who eat meat kill the seed of great compassion.....Whether walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, the smell of meat follows them, and all beings who sense it give rise to fear. It is like when a person approaches a lion: upon seeing it or catching its scent, fear naturally arises." As Mahayana practitioners, we must cultivate both wisdom and compassion. Eating meat instills fear in other beings, making them afraid to get close, which goes against the practice of compassion.

In the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the Buddha also said: "Those who eat meat have immeasurable faults. All great bodhisattvas, who cultivate great compassion, should not eat meat." The Buddha further elaborated on the faults of eating meat and the merits of vegetarianism: "Those who crave for meat fall into killing one another. They turn away from the virtuous and remain bound in the suffering of birth and death. But those who relinquish the

craving for meat will taste the flavor of the true Dharma. Practicing sincerely upon the Bodhisattva Path, they can swiftly attain the Anuttara Samyaksambodhi (supreme, perfect enlightenment).

Moreover, the *Jataka* tells many noble deeds from the Buddha's past lives, in which he, still on the path of practice, willingly gave his own body to save other beings. For example, the well-known stories of cutting his flesh to feed an eagle and offering himself to a hungry tigress. As Mahayana practitioners, we are called to hear the Buddha's words and follow his example. If we cannot even sacrifice ourselves to save others, yet still indulge in our appetite for food by taking the lives of other beings, should we not feel deeply ashamed?

In addition to the above sutras, the *Brahma Net Sutra's* *Bodhisattva Precepts* also clearly states that: "As a disciple of the Buddha, deliberately eating meat violates the precept against it. To eat meat is to cut off the seed of great compassion. When sentient beings see such a person,

they will turn away. Therefore, all bodhisattvas must not eat the meat of sentient beings, for eating meat creates immeasurable evil karma. Those who intentionally eat meat create light defiled offense.”

Why is eating meat prohibited? It is because eating meat of sentient beings goes against the practice of compassion, and causes fear among living beings. A bodhisattva’s vow is to embrace all living beings, to bring them joy, and to help them take delight in drawing near. But if bodhisattvas cause beings to feel fear, it is impossible to build good karmic connections with them, and even more difficult to guide them further along the path of awakening.

Thus, Emperor Wu, drawing on these Mahayana sutras and Vinaya texts, composed the *Tract on Abstaining from Alcohol and Meat*. In this text, he exhorted the Fourfold Assembly of disciples to refrain from drinking alcohol and eating meat. And he stipulated that all members of the Sangha must abandon both. The text declares: “Those who eat meat obstruct the arising of bodhicitta,

do not walk the Bodhisattva path, are devoid of the Four Immeasurables, and lack great loving-kindness and great compassion. For this reason, they cannot be regarded as true disciples of the Buddha.”

Because of Emperor Wu’s vigorous advocacy, a vegetarian tradition began to take shape in Chinese Buddhism and continues to this day.

II

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VEGETARIANISM AND THE SRAVAKA VEHICLE BUDDHISM

Buddhism speaks of two vehicles of practice: the Sravaka Vehicle and the Bodhisattva Vehicle, also known as the Lesser Vehicle and the Greater Vehicle. Why “lesser” and “greater”? In fact, both share the same aim—liberation from ignorance, delusion, and affliction. Yet the difference lies in the scope of aspiration: seeking personal liberation or aspiring to lead all sentient beings toward the path of liberation. If your goal is only personal liberation, this is the aspiration of the Sravaka Vehicle, therefore it is called the “lesser.” If you seek not only personal liberation, but

also to guide all sentient beings toward liberation, this is the aspiration of the Bodhisattva Vehicle, therefore it is called the “greater.”

In accordance with different aspirations, corresponding precepts are established. The precepts of the Sravaka Vehicle emphasize refraining from evil deeds. For example, the Five Precepts: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, and no intoxicants. Each precept begins with a “no,” indicating what must not be done. The same applies to the Eight Precepts, the Precepts for Novices, and the Bhikṣu Precepts. All of these precepts focus on refraining from doing evil—guiding us to prevent unwholesome actions. This is known as the discipline of restraint: upholding the precepts by ceasing unwholesome actions.

The first four of the Five Precepts are called natural moral laws, meaning that the actions themselves are unwholesome and therefore must be prohibited. These are also the four fundamental heavy crimes in monastic precepts.

Therefore, “no killing” is a crucial aspect of the Sravaka Precepts. Some may wonder: it was mentioned earlier that Theravada Buddhism does not prohibit the eating of meat. However, it is important to note that this allowance is conditional. In the Theravada tradition, meat may only be consumed if it is considered “Threefold Pure Meat.”

The Threefold Pure Meat requires three conditions: not seen, not heard, and not suspected. “Not seen” means that you have not witnessed that the animal was killed for you to eat. “Not heard” means that you have not heard that the animal was killed for you to eat. “Not suspected” means that there is no evidence to indicate that the animal was killed for you to eat. When all three conditions are satisfied, the meat is considered pure and thus permissible to eat. Conversely, if any of these conditions is not met, the meat is considered to fall within the scope of killing and should not be eaten.

Threefold Pure Meat is permitted under the Sravaka precepts. But as long as there is demand, there will be

people in the trade, which inevitably leads to the killing of animals. Even if animals are not killed directly for you, they are still indirectly killed for your sake. If we trace it back to the source, the responsibility is still ours. If the eating of meat were reduced, or even eliminated entirely, then the number of people engaged in the trade would naturally decrease. This way, many animals could be spared from slaughter and butchery.

Of course, under the traditional alms-around system, there is not much choice available, so eating meat is not prohibited in Sravaka Buddhism. However, we must realize that if we have the capability to maintain a vegetarian diet, it represents the ultimate form of “no killing” and fully embodies the compassionate spirit of Buddhism.

III

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VEGETARIANISM AND MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

Although Chinese Buddhism belongs to the Mahayana tradition, it does not embody the proactive and altruistic spirit that Mahayana emphasizes. Instead, it often gives a passive and world-renouncing impression. This is because in China, most Buddhists focus only on their own practice. For example, those who chant the Amitabha Buddha's name often wish to quickly be reborn in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss, while those who practice Chan meditation often seek to free themselves from the cycle of birth and death as soon as possible. However, fewer

have ever thought of leading more people toward the path of liberation. Therefore, the social misunderstanding of Buddhism is not groundless; to a large extent, it arises from our own actions.

Why is this the case? It is because we neither fully grasp or put into practice the unique spirit of the Mahayana, which distinguishes itself from the Sravaka teachings. This unique spirit is bodhicitta. As Mahayana practitioners, we must constantly remind ourselves that our goal is not only to awaken ourselves, but also to help all sentient beings awaken. This should be our life goal across endless future lives. Only when we establish such an aspiration can we truly become bodhisattva practitioners. Without this aspiration, no matter how many Mahayana texts we have studied, we cannot become qualified Mahayana practitioners. If taking refuge in the Three Jewels represents our choice of faith, then giving rise to bodhicitta signifies that we have truly entered the Mahayana path.

In regions of Chinese Buddhism, many people are eager

to receive the Bodhisattva Precepts. However, they often do it merely as a formality, without realizing that bodhicitta is the very essence of Bodhisattva Precepts. If they have never aroused bodhicitta first, such so-called “bodhisattvas” are bodhisattvas in name only, lacking the true spirit of bodhicitta. In fact, after bodhicitta has arisen, one should further receive the Bodhisattva Precepts and follow the conduct of a bodhisattva. Therefore, receiving the Bodhisattva Precepts does not mean that we have attained a higher “rank.” Rather, it means that we have set higher standards for ourselves.

The Bodhisattva Precepts differ from the Sravaka Precepts. The Sravaka Precepts focus more on refraining from evil, while the Bodhisattva Precepts include three aspects: refraining from evil, cultivating wholesome actions, and benefiting all sentient beings. In other words, bodhisattva practitioners break the precepts when they fail to refrain from evil, neglect to cultivate wholesome actions, or ignore opportunities to benefit sentient beings.

Why is this so? Because bodhicitta represents a noble altruistic aspiration, and an awakened mind. As we know, attaining Buddhahood is about achieving the full awakening of life. When we give rise to bodhicitta, we are vowing to become an awakened one, like the Buddha. But what is the connection between becoming an awakened being and benefiting all beings? As ordinary beings, we are often self-centered, fall into self-attachment and eventually lose ourselves. When we shift our life goal from ourselves to others, this can weaken self-attachment, and help us realize emptiness and see our true nature. Therefore, by practicing altruism, we can realize not only compassion, but also inner awakening.

In Mahayana Buddhism, each path of practice is inseparable from cultivating bodhicitta or from nurturing compassion. Choosing a vegetarian lifestyle is a concrete way to practice compassion. Once we make this choice, we can live it out day after day, month after month, year after year, without setting aside any extra time for practice. As Confucius taught: “Do not do unto others what you

would not like others to do unto yourself.” All beings cherish life and fear death. Since we feel this fear in our mind, we should extend the same understanding to other beings—not causing them fear, but instead offering them care, loving-kindness and compassion.

Loving-kindness means the wish to bring happiness to others, while compassion is the wish to ease their suffering. On the one hand, we create favorable conditions for sentient beings to attain happiness; on the other hand, we give a helping hand to free them from the endless suffering. From the moment we give rise to bodhicitta, we must persevere in relieving the suffering of beings and bringing them happiness, ultimately attaining great loving-kindness and great compassion of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Here, the standard of “great” lies in being able to give rise to loving-kindness and compassion toward all beings equally, without exception. If there is even one being whom we are unwilling to show compassion, it simply

indicates that our practice of compassion is not complete. Then, how can we expand our present compassion—often limited and tainted with discrimination—into something boundless? The practice of the Four Immeasurables offers the way. It gradually opens our minds to immeasurable loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. They are embodied in four altruistic aspirations: “May all beings enjoy happiness and the causes of happiness; may all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering; may all beings always possess happiness free from suffering, with contented body and mind; may all beings abide in equanimity, devoid of greed and aversion.”

If the practice of the Four Immeasurables is not specific enough, we can turn to the *Metta Sutra* in Theravada Buddhism. While listening to it, we can internalize each verse as our own aspiration: “May I be free from suffering; may my parents be free from suffering; may my friends be free from suffering; may all humanity be free from suffering.” We need to repeat and cultivate these reflections

continually. By reminding ourselves in this way day after day, the power of loving-kindness and compassion will naturally grow.

In Buddhism, loving-kindness and compassion are the causes for the arising of bodhicitta. Only with loving-kindness and compassion can we sincerely bring benefit to all beings. In turn, bodhicitta is the cause that perfects loving-kindness and compassion. Only with bodhicitta can we expand loving-kindness and compassion from finite to infinite.

As stated in the *Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Chapter*: “All sentient beings are like the roots of a tree, all buddhas and bodhisattvas are its flowers and fruits. By benefiting sentient beings with the water of great compassion, one can bring forth the flowers and fruits of the wisdom of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.” This teaching tells us that the fruit of enlightenment attained by buddhas and bodhisattvas is inseparable from the soil—the vast ground of all sentient

beings. Only through benefiting all beings can our loving-kindness and compassion continually grow and ultimately reach perfection. From a worldly perspective, as our loving-kindness and compassion increase, our blessings increase as well. With greater blessings, our career becomes more successful, and others naturally feel happy around us. Therefore, loving-kindness and compassion are the greatest wealth in life.

In summary, Mahayana Buddhism prohibits eating meat because it emphasizes the cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion. This Bodhisattva Path is not only about seeking our own liberation, but also about fostering wholesome connections with all beings. If we harm them, or even take their lives as food, how could we possibly guide them toward liberation? Thus, vegetarianism is in complete harmony with the Mahayana spirit; it is a direct way to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion, as well as a practical application of the Mahayana spirit.

IV

WHY PROMOTE VEGETARIANISM?

Vegetarianism helps us eliminate the mentality of killing and the habit of hatred. In Buddhism, the *Sutra of the Path of Ten Good Karmas* outlines the ten benefits of refraining from killing. The sutra states: “By refraining from killing, one realizes ten ways of freedom from affliction. What are these ten?

- (a) Able to give fearlessness to all beings;
- (b) Constantly generate great loving-kindness toward all beings;
- (c) Forever cut off all habits of aversion;
- (d) Remain free from illness;

- (e) Attain longevity;
- (f) Constantly protected by non-human beings;
- (g) Enjoy peaceful sleep, free from bad dreams;
- (h) Resolve bonds of enmity, and all hostilities naturally dissolve;
- (i) Free from the fear of falling into the three lower realms;
- (j) Be reborn in the heavenly realms after death.

These are the ten benefits. If one dedicates such merits toward the attainment of *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* (supreme enlightenment), then upon attaining Buddhahood, one will enjoy a lifespan of complete freedom.”

Here are specific explanations. First, a person without the intent to kill poses no threat to anyone, thus giving all beings the gift of fearlessness. Second, it nurtures compassion; refraining from killing out of empathy keeps the mind gentle and soft. Third, it eradicates hatred forever. As the saying goes, “The benevolent have no enemies.” When no one stands against you, who is there to hate or resent? Fourth, it promotes physical health and protects

against illness. Aside from the four imbalances of the four elements, many diseases arise from the negative karma of harming living beings. Fifth, by not cutting short the lives of other beings, one can receive the karmic reward of longevity. Sixth, wherever you go, Dharma protectors will be there to safeguard you. Seventh, refraining from harming others frees one from the fear of being harmed in return, and from being disturbed by nightmares. Eighth, it prevents the arising of new enmities and even helps dissolve old ones. Ninth, it eliminates the fear of falling into lower realms in future lives. Tenth, at the end of life, this wholesome karma can lead to rebirth in heavenly realms.

The ten great benefits include both physical and mental health. Health is a major concern today. Once, in an interview, I shared these words: “Physical health is life’s greatest wealth, and cultivating the mind and character is life’s most valuable work.” In today’s world, although material conditions have greatly improved, people’s overall sense of happiness remains low. Moreover, mental health issues are on the rise. What is the root cause? I believe it has a lot to

do with people's lifestyles.

As technology advances and commerce flourishes, we find ourselves living a lifestyle that seems rich, but chaotic. In fact, we face countless choices and temptations every day, so most of us become restless, chaotic, and unable to control ourselves. Today, people are quite unfortunate, for many have lost the ability to rest. Day after day, we keep ourselves endlessly busy—busy with working, caring for family, and having fun. This constant busyness has become such a powerful habit that we simply can't find a moment of calm. Moreover, this lifestyle often comes at the cost of physical and mental well-being. The price is so heavy that, by the time we become aware of it, it is often too late to turn back.

This lifestyle not only unsettles our body and mind, but also causes devastating harm to the ecological environment. Today, when we talk about environmental protection, planting a few trees or launching a publicity campaign is far from enough to solve the problem. The

real problem is that our way of life runs counter to environmental protection. If we do not make any changes, the environmental protection we advocate will remain nothing more than a passive, temporary fix—unable to stop the ongoing deterioration of the environment.

Many times, although we advocate environmental protection, we still lead lives that are far from eco-friendly. This lifestyle is precisely the key factor that wears out our body and mind and contributes to the worsening of the environment. When reflecting on this issue, I am thinking of the Buddhist precepts. Why does spiritual practice begin with observing precepts? Because this helps us establish a lifestyle that is healthy and beneficial to both body and mind. With such a foundation, we are able to cultivate a calm and peaceful state of mind, and on that basis, further develop concentration and unlock wisdom. Just as it is true in spiritual practice, so it is in daily life. Only with a healthy lifestyle can we maintain a healthy body and mind, and avoid causing significant harm to the environment.

Vegetarianism is a healthy way of life. However, in China, people still have many misunderstandings and prejudices about it. Some believe that vegetarianism leads to malnutrition, while others think it is simply a last resort for those struggling with financial difficulties. These misconceptions have seriously hindered the wider acceptance of vegetarianism. In fact, many modern studies have shown that, whether from the standpoint of human physiology or the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables, a vegetarian diet is more suitable for human beings and more beneficial to both physical and mental health than a meat-based diet. Since there is already an abundance of reliable information available online, I will not elaborate further here.

From an environmental perspective, vegetarianism is one of the most effective choices for addressing the environmental crisis. Many studies have shown that the large-scale expansion of the livestock industry is the leading cause of global warming. In fact, livestock farming accounts for 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions—more than the

total emissions from all forms of transportation. At the same time, livestock farming consumes large amounts of land and water resources. The data on these impacts is truly alarming. If we don't make changes, our daily activities will continue to harm the planet and accelerate environmental collapse.

Therefore, vegetarianism not only benefits one's physical and mental health, but also contributes to the protection of the global environment. It is a civilized, healthy, and modern way of life. In fact, such a lifestyle is becoming the wise choice of many thoughtful and discerning people.

V

SUPPORTING CONDITIONS FOR OPENING A VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

To successfully open a vegetarian restaurant, we must first understand the essential conditions for success.

First, it is important to begin with the right aspiration. A vegetarian restaurant is not simply a place that provides food, but a place where we hope visitors can truly benefit. In fact, adopting a vegetarian diet is sowing the seed of loving-kindness and compassion. Through adopting a vegetarian diet, if someone cultivates loving-kindness and compassion for all beings, it will bring great benefits to

their future life. Furthermore, a vegetarian diet represents a healthy and eco-friendly diet. To promote vegetarianism is to promote health and environmental protection. With such an aspiration in running a vegetarian restaurant, we will naturally gain public support, bringing benefit to both ourselves and others.

Second, it is important to create a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere. For a vegetarian restaurant, the staff should embody a demeanor that is distinct from that of ordinary restaurant employees. To achieve this, they can be encouraged to learn basic Buddhist etiquette and engage in simple practices. For example, many restaurants hold morning meetings; in a vegetarian restaurant, the staff can listen to the *Metta Sutta*, and recite the Five Precepts and the Four Immeasurables. Such practices help them develop a calm and gentle presence, radiating compassion and serenity. In this way, when customers step into the restaurant, they will naturally sense a unique atmosphere.

Third, a vegetarian restaurant can be a space for spreading Buddhist culture. A reading area with easy-to-read Buddhist books can be set up for guests to browse or take home. Beyond regular business hours, the space could be opened for public reading, which makes it more accessible and creates a welcoming atmosphere. From another perspective, as more people embrace Buddhism, they may choose to adopt a vegetarian diet and refrain from killing, thereby increasing the potential customer base.

Fourth, place importance on promoting vegetarianism. For example, visually appealing brochures can be created and printed to illustrate the benefits of a vegetarian diet. In this way, more people can come to understand why vegetarianism matters, what specific benefits it offers, and how to enjoy a diet that is both healthy and delicious. When presented in an appealing and accessible way, this information can exert a subtle yet lasting influence, like gentle rain that nourishes all things in silence. When someone truly appreciates the value of vegetarianism, they will be more likely to visit a vegetarian restaurant

regularly, rather than only occasionally.

Fifth, organize environmental and charitable activities. Since vegetarians often have kind hearts and care about public welfare, a vegetarian restaurant can serve as a platform for such events. In doing so, such efforts not only benefit the community, but also expand the restaurant's influence and enhance its own sense of solidarity.

Sixth, when the time is right, organize regular book clubs or lectures on Buddhism, culture, art, and wellness to build a dedicated community.

If these aspects are carried out well, the restaurant will not only provide food, but also promote a culture and a vision of healthy living. Opening a vegetarian restaurant with this aspiration is entirely different from doing it solely for profit. From another perspective, as long as the aspiration is sincere and altruistic, the restaurant will naturally gain recognition and receive greater support.

VI

HOW TO OPERATE A VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

Of course, aspiration alone is not enough, because people ultimately come to a vegetarian restaurant for the meal itself. Therefore, we must also put significant effort on both the design of the space and the quality of the food. I'd like to offer a few suggestions.

First, create a Chan-inspired space while avoiding an overly religious atmosphere, as that might discourage non-Buddhists. A Chan-inspired space should convey a sense of tranquility and spaciousness, allowing customers to enjoy not only vegetarian food, but also a deeper

sense of spiritual well-being. Nowadays, people increasingly value overall experience. When dining, they often care more about how they feel than about the food itself. Therefore, if a restaurant offers a space that leaves a lasting impression, it will naturally become a key reason customers choose to return. This idea aligns with the Buddhist concept of “sensory food”—food that pleases both body and mind.

Second, ensure the food is healthy. In China, food safety is a major concern for everyone. Often, we are unaware of how many harmful substances are in our food. A vegetarian restaurant should make every effort to offer green food, so customers can feel confident that the food they enjoy here is both healthy and safe. Building this reputation will become a distinctive strength of the restaurant.

Third, highlight the uniqueness of the ingredients. By selecting ingredients from around the world, a vegetarian restaurant can demonstrate that vegetarian food is far more than just simple vegetables and *tofu*. It can be a

delightful experience that satisfies the appetite and broadens one's horizons.

Fourth, pay attention to the art of cooking. Vegetarian cuisine should not only emphasize color, aroma, and taste, but also cultivate a sense of visual beauty. From the dish itself to the plating and presentation, every detail should harmonize to create an experience that delights the eye. In this way, customers will not only enjoy the taste, but also appreciate the unique care behind each dish.

Fifth, cater to different needs. People who occasionally eat vegetarian food and those who do so regularly have different expectations for taste and price. We should balance these needs by offering them delicious meals while leaving a lasting positive impression. At the same time, we must keep prices reasonable so that customers are happy to return. Only in this way can vegetarian cuisine truly become part of everyday life, as well as a long-term choice rather than merely an occasional one.

If we run a vegetarian restaurant with these principles in mind and develop our unique characteristics, vegetarianism will have a real chance to attract public attention and even become a mainstream dietary choice in society. To make this happen, we must all work together.

VII

CONCLUSION

Albert Einstein once said, “Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet. Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.” Henry David Thoreau also said, “I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals ...”

Today, from Asia to Europe and America, the number of vegetarians is steadily growing. As public awareness of vegetarianism continues to grow, people are also seeking

healthier diets and showing greater commitment to a low-carbon lifestyle. Together, these changes are helping this way of eating gain wider acceptance and respect. As professionals in the vegetarian industry, you are working in a growing field full of potential. I hope that you can approach this work with great compassion and dedication. In doing so, you can help more people understand and choose vegetarianism, refrain from killing, and cultivate compassion for all beings, thereby benefiting both yourselves and others.

国际静心协会、静心学堂简介

国际静心协会（简称 MPI）是 2021 年成立于瑞士苏黎世的非盈利组织，旨在向全球传播佛法智慧和禅意生活。

静心学堂为“国际静心协会”旗下的核心公益品牌，致力于传承生命觉醒教育，为现代人提供安顿身心、安身立命之道。我们推广的静心学堂课程体系，为汉传佛教济群长老以四十年修学所证，对当代佛教教育的探索，包括禅意生活、智慧人生和觉醒之道。同时，我们将在世界各地营造具有禅意的空间、彼此增上的氛围，为大众修学保驾护航。

“静心学堂丛书”呈现了禅意生活、智慧人生的部分课程。我们衷心希望，更多人由此了解生命觉醒的教育，共享东方智慧给人类带来的福祉。

Mindful Peace International & Mindful Peace Academy

Mindful Peace International (MPI), established in 2021 in Zurich, Switzerland, is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading Buddhist wisdom and promoting a Chan-inspired life globally.

The Mindful Peace Academy serves as the core public welfare brand under Mindful Peace International. We are dedicated to passing on education about life awakening and offering modern individuals ways towards physical and mental well-being, thereby helping them ground themselves and discover their life's mission. The curriculum we promote at the Mindful Peace Academy has been authenticated by Master Jiqun, an eminent elder of Han Buddhism, through forty years of study and practice. It represents an exploration of contemporary Buddhist education, encompassing teachings on the Chan-inspired Life, the Wisdom for Living, and the Path to Awakening. Moreover, we are committed to creating Chan-inspired spaces and fostering mutually enriching environments worldwide to safeguard the public's learning journey.

The Mindful Peace Academy Collection showcases a selection of courses on the Chan-inspired Life and the Wisdom for Living. We sincerely hope that through these courses, more individuals will engage with life awakening education and share in the blessings that Eastern wisdom brings to humanity.

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