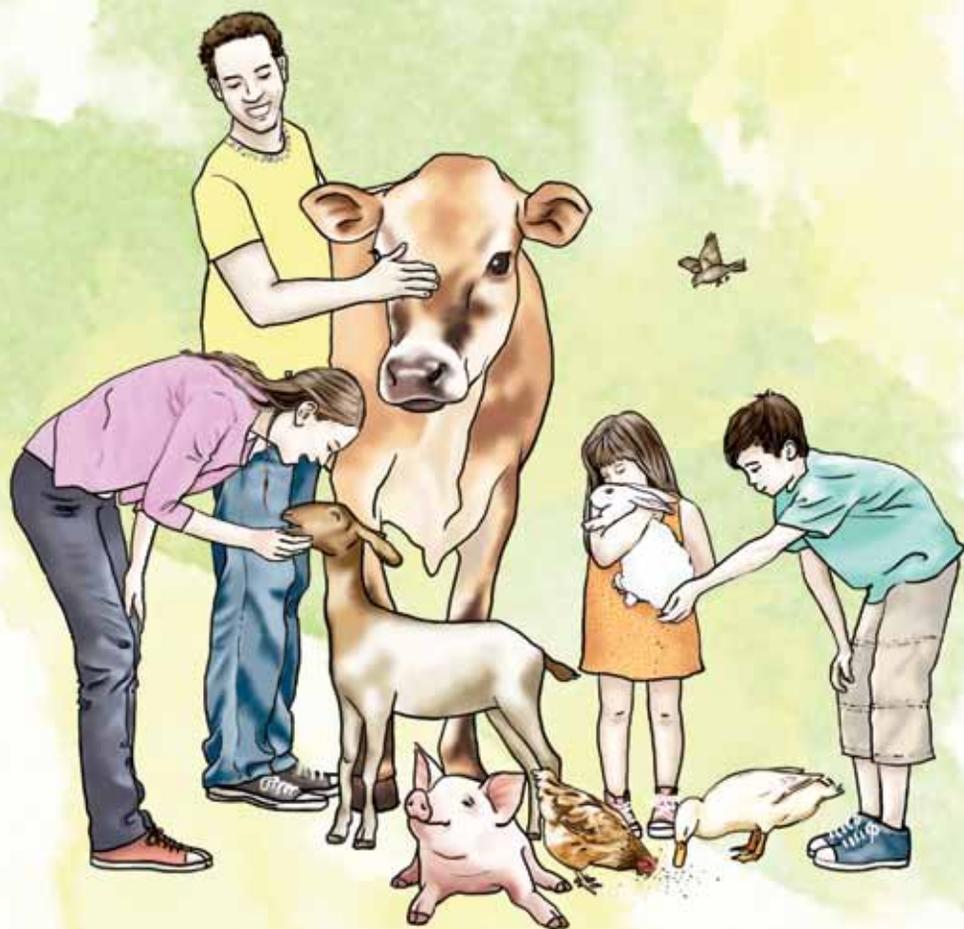


# do we have a choice?



*Towards more compassionate eating*

Chan Kah Yein, Ph.D

# Do We Have a Choice?

*Towards more compassionate eating*

Chan Kah Yein, Ph.D

For all the humble birds and beasts.

This book is a gift from others to you.  
If you have enjoyed reading it, please pass it on.  
Let it be your gift to others.

*About the Author*



**Chan Kah Yein** holds a Ph.D in Mathematics Education and teaches in a private college. She is the founder-coordinator of AnimalCare, a medical fund for stray animals. She also gives public talks regularly on ways to lead a simpler and more spiritually fulfilling life. To date, she has written seven books, and many of her talks have been produced on audio CDs, all for free distribution. With a love for all things small and simple, her motto is to embrace simplicity and travel light in life.

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Her AnimalCare work is documented in  
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## Also by the Author

### Books

Pawprints on My Heart, 2008  
*Seven Little Stories about Kindness to Animals*

Little Steps, Joyful Steps, 2008  
*The Humble Beginnings of a Dhamma Speaker*

A Kite in the Wind, 2008  
*Embrace Simplicity, Travel Light in Life*

Indy Jones & the 4 Pillars of Kindness, 2009  
*A Story about Love, Compassion, Rejoicing and Letting Go*

See You at Rainbow Bridge, 2010  
*Saying Goodbye with Love and Serenity*

Make Time While the Sun Shines, 2011  
*Anecdotes on Respecting Time and Tide*

### Audio Talks in CDs

How to Practise Right Livelihood and Still be Rich, 2006

Kindness to Animals, 2007

Awakening Kindness, 2007

Creating Heaven in an Imperfect World, 2008

Dewdrops from My Heart, 2009  
*A Treasury of 28 Talks*

Fragrance of the Violet, 2011  
*A Treasury of 20 Talks*

*The love for all creatures  
is the noblest attribute of man.*

— Charles Darwin

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And to all of you – thank you for picking up this book, reading it and passing it on...

May the animals benefit from my humble endeavour.

With love,

*kahyein*

7<sup>th</sup> August 2011

# Prologue

This is NOT a book aimed at making you feel bad that you still eat meat. It is also not a book aimed at trying to convert you into a vegetarian.

Rather, this is a book that invites you to consider EATING LESS MEAT. I was motivated to write this book because I observed that most people have a natural compassion for animals. Many do want to eat less meat, not just for health reasons or to reduce one's carbon footprint, but for the simple reason that we all know animals suffer so much at the slaughterhouses. Out of compassion for these animals, most people *do* want to eat less meat. But sometimes we just do not know how to start, or maybe we need some motivation to push us to do it.

That is the aim of this book – to give us that little push... towards more compassionate eating.

*I will not kill or hurt any living creature needlessly, nor  
destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive to save and  
comfort all gentle life, and guard and protect all natural  
beauty upon the earth.*

– John Ruskin



## The Lady in the Orange *Saree*

I grew up eating meat, but not extravagantly. And not all meats too. Just chicken, fish and the occasional pork. Like many Chinese families, we did not eat beef or mutton.

I remember the first time I ever came across a vegetarian. I was seven years old then. My mum had brought me to a sports carnival at her school, and she pointed out this absolutely stunning Indian lady dressed in a pale orange *saree*. This lady was also a teacher in the school. She was so ravishingly beautiful; I was completely entranced. Her hourglass figure was “out of this world”, and her complexion was flawless, but what caught my eye was the radiance which shone from her face. The first thought that occurred to me was that she must be a very kind and compassionate person. I decided there and then that only a kind person could possibly have such a beautiful face. Then, my mum whispered to me, “She is a life vegetarian. Her whole family is, too.”

That was the first time it dawned on me that being vegetarian might not be such a bad idea, after all.

Till today, I still remember the radiant face of that beautiful goddess who descended upon this Earth, resplendent in a pale orange *saree*, and walked in front of me at the sports carnival.

John Keats was right: A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

My mum observed vegetarianism every new moon and full moon day, as did my grandmother. Like all good mothers, my mum never compelled us to follow what she did. She just let us watch, and if we asked, she would answer. And so, I grew up eating meat, but the idea of becoming a vegetarian was always at the back of my mind.

When I was twelve, my family embraced Buddhism. As with many Chinese Buddhists, we would observe vegetarianism every new moon and full moon day, and on our birthdays. I remember asking the nuns at the temple why they are full-fledged vegetarians whereas we don't have to be. "It's because you are still young and you need to grow, and your parents need to work, you need the energy", they told me. That made sense to me at that time. So I accepted it as it was.

But throughout my childhood I continued to remember the beautiful lady in the orange *saree*.

## 2 The Chick in the Burger

In my twenties, I began to feel very sorry for the pig, so I stopped eating pork altogether. I had never liked *Bak Kut Teh* (a popular Chinese pork dish) anyway, so it wasn't a big sacrifice.

When I was pregnant with my two children, my parents turned vegetarians for the entire duration of both my pregnancies. They believed it would be good for the unborn child. Similarly, when my brother and his wife were expecting their child, my brother too observed vegetarianism. He liked it so much he decided to be vegetarian for life. Soon after, his family and my parents became full-fledged vegetarians as well.

I had always considered going vegetarian. Since I cooked our meals at home, I was in control of what we ate. Gradually, I reduced our meat intake at home. I stopped cooking chicken stew and, instead, only used a small amount of minced chicken meat as a condiment in our vegetable dishes. Next, I stopped buying fish. My daughter and I did not miss the taste of meat. We figured it's all in the mind. The tongue may want, but the head and heart can control the tongue.

One day, my son saw a PowerPoint slide I was preparing for my talk on *Kindness to Animals*. It showed the picture of a

live chick sandwiched between two buns, and I had put the caption “Do we have a choice?”. Straightaway, he then told me we could dispense with the minced chicken meat. “Let’s not cook meat at home anymore”, he said.

So that was it.

I stopped buying minced meat, and, from that very next day, I stopped cooking meat altogether at home. Nowadays, the only meat I buy is chicken meat for the cats, and that is because cats are carnivores and they have to eat meat. We are omnivores, so we get to choose. We can be total vegetarians, or we could just eat less meat. We cannot force carnivorous animals to be vegetarian – that’ll be going against nature and that wouldn’t be fair.

For us humans, many are of the opinion that we need lots of protein daily, but do we really? Vegetables are actually already a very good source of protein. And, if you think about it, human babies grow perfectly well on mother’s milk alone for the first 6-12 months of their lives, and I was told that mother’s milk is just 3% protein!

I read that a typical cheeseburger provides 0.05 grams of protein per calorie whereas spinach provides 0.12 grams of protein per calorie and lentils 0.07 grams per calorie. Some nutritionists are also of the opinion that by eating a variety of vegetables, we can get most of the essential amino acids (protein) that our body needs. Variety is the keyword here.

Ever since the day my son said we’d stop buying meat, we do not cook any meat at home anymore. But, when we eat out,

take away or go for dinners, we eat whatever that is served. This is our personal preference of not being a burden to our hosts. Sometimes I just pick the vegetables in every dish, and that's really a very easy thing to do. There is no need to make a fuss and announce to the whole world that we choose to be vegetarian.

Since I give so many talks on kindness to animals, I'm very often asked if I am vegetarian. To this I answer, "I'm a flexible vegetarian", and that is the truth. When there are really no vegetables, I will eat whatever that is available. I am flexible. I eat out for lunch every working day, and I don't need to go to any special vegetarian stall. All I do is to pick 2-3 vegetable dishes at the local *chap-fan* ("economy rice", a convenient local fast food for rice and dishes at a very affordable price) stall with a plate of rice. It is so easy.

Becoming vegetarian is a personal choice. It is sometimes a hard one for many because we are so used to the taste of meat, and our tongue (and brain!) demands it, due to decades of conditioning. Also, for some people, their bodies may require some nutrients that are derived from meat.

However, eating less meat is definitely doable. So if you're game to try this, if you have enough willpower to do it, for the sake of saving those poor animals from being slaughtered and so that we do not contribute so much to the demand for meat, please read on...

This book is dedicated to you.

*Oh, my fellow men, do not defile your bodies with sinful foods. We have corn, we have apples bending down the branches with their weight, and grapes swelling on the vines. There are sweet-flavored herbs, and vegetables which can be cooked and softened over the fire, nor are you denied milk or thyme-scented honey. The earth affords a lavish supply of riches, of innocent foods, and offers you banquets that involve no bloodshed or slaughter; only beasts satisfy their hunger with flesh, and not even all of those, because horses, cattle, and sheep live on grass.*

*– Pythagoras*

# 3 Are We Natural Vegetarians?

This chapter is extracted from [http://www.alternative-healthzine.com/html/are\\_we\\_natural\\_vegetarians.html](http://www.alternative-healthzine.com/html/are_we_natural_vegetarians.html)

*A cat or dog salivates with anticipated pleasure at the sight and smell of raw meat, but very few humans exhibit this behaviour. For most meat eaters, their chosen cut needs to be cooked before it becomes attractive. This is just one factor that might make us wonder whether eating meat is natural for us, and whether being a vegetarian is a realistic option.*

*Other clues can be found by comparing the anatomy and physiology of humans with different types of animals. It emerges that humans are far more similar to fruit- and nut-eating animals – vegetarians such as monkeys and apes, and to leaf- and grass- eating animals such as sheep, cattle, elephants and koalas, than to carnivores.*

*The following two lists show the characteristics, first, of carnivores, and then of non-carnivores, or vegetarians.*

*Carnivores generally:*

- 1. Have very short digestive tracts (three times their body length) to excrete decaying meat waste rapidly.*
- 2. Produce very strong stomach acid – typically 20 times stronger than that of a non-carnivore – to digest bone, sinews and large quantities of meat.*

3. *Produce small amounts of saliva because digestion does not begin in the mouth with carnivores.*
4. *Tend to have jaws that can only move up and down, which means that they cannot grind their food and can hardly chew at all. Meat is torn off with their long, sharp incisors and their canines, and is swallowed in large chunks. The teeth are also shaped and angled to move with a shearing motion to cut through bone and tough sinews.*
5. *Show great agility in catching prey, and have sharp claws and strong jaws to bring down, kill and consume prey.*

*However, vegetarians – non-carnivorous animals and humans – generally:*

1. *Have long digestive tracts that are about 12 times the body length. The great length allows the longer period of time that is needed for fruit and vegetables to be digested completely.*
2. *Have weak stomach acid, which is all that is necessary for the slow digestion of grasses, grains and vegetable matter.*
3. *Produce a larger quantity of saliva, which also contains the enzyme ptyalin. The plentiful saliva and the ptyalin begin the digestion of grains, fruit and vegetables in the mouth. Carnivores neither eat these kinds of food nor do they chew their food, which means that digestive enzymes in their saliva are absent.*
4. *Have jaws that move with a grinding motion. This grinding together of the relatively flat teeth reduces the particle size of the food and exposes it to the saliva and ptyalin in the mouth. Human canine and incisor teeth are small compared to those of a carnivore and are,*

*perhaps, better suited to biting tough vegetables rather than animal skin and bone.*

5. *Have no claws, relatively weak jaws and not a great deal of agility. For example, if a chicken is placed in an open space it would be extremely difficult for a human to catch it; we don't appear to be designed for that sort of activity.*

*The evidence seems clear that humans have evolved to eat little or no meat – to be vegetarian.*

To sum it all up, here's a quote I like:

*You put a baby in a crib with an apple and a rabbit.  
If it eats the rabbit and plays with the apple, I'll buy you a new car.*

– Harvey Diamond

*It is certainly not lions or wolves that we eat out of self-defense; on the contrary, we ignore these and slaughter harmless, tame creatures without stings or teeth to harm us. For the sake of a little flesh we deprive them of sun, of light, of the duration of life to which they are entitled by birth and being. If you declare that you are naturally designed for such a diet, then first kill for yourself what you want to eat. Do it, however, only through your own resources, unaided by cleaver or cudgel or any kind of axe.*

– The Roman Plutarch, in an essay “On Eating Flesh”.

 Old MacDonald's Farm

Before you read on, please be forewarned that this chapter describes unpalatable things that happen in some animal farms, and you might feel discomfort reading it. We can choose to skip this chapter and not find out about the horrible sufferings that go on in factory farms. By doing that, we choose not to know the facts and probably might continue eating meat, as much as before. Or we might brace ourselves for the gore, read on and, at the end of the chapter, make an informed decision from what our conscience is telling us.

For the sake of the animals and for the sake of humanity, I hope you do read on.

Here we go...

*If slaughterhouses had glass walls,  
everyone would be a vegetarian.*

– Paul McCartney

I think all of us know that modern-day factory farming is cruel.

In the days of yore, factory-farming was unheard of. Animals were allowed to grow up naturally, and they lived freely on the farm. Only once in a blue moon, when festivities arise, would

the unfortunate animal be caught and slaughtered. Yes, that was cruel too, but definitely not as cruel as what goes on in modern-day factory farms, where animals are born and bred to be slaughtered as food, and in the shortest possible time too. Most of the meat we eat are baby animals who have never even had a chance to grow up, what more, to live a natural life. Some have never even seen the sun or walked on grass.

According to statistics from the book *Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safran Foer, people nowadays eat 150 times more chicken than they did 80 years ago. A survey in the UK estimates that a meat-eater would end up eating at least 11,000 animals in one lifetime. This means that a meat-eating person *indirectly* causes the death of thousands of animals in his lifetime, if one accepts the supply-demand theory. Staggering, isn't it? And the saddest part is how much suffering each animal has to endure before it is slaughtered.

A modern-day factory farm is no less than a torture chamber for these poor suffering animals. What I'm going to share with you here in this chapter is what I've gathered from watching, albeit reluctantly, some videos, which I never got to finish because they were too gory, and reading about the conditions in factory farms. Granted, maybe the practices in every farm are different, but how humane can killing be? Killing is still killing. Animals, having a heightened sixth sense, are traumatized before they get killed. They feel so helpless, so sad and so fearful. Just imagine for a moment if we are being carted down an aisle to be slaughtered, and we are watching our friends and relatives being slaughtered, wouldn't we be frightened too?

I have never visited a factory farm before. I don't think I would dare to. I'd probably cry for weeks and be traumatized for the rest of my life.

Would *you* dare visit a factory farm or a slaughterhouse?

The following are written based on what I have read. Granted, these practices may not be implemented in all farms. But as I've written, killing is still killing. And killing can never be humane, especially when a living being does not even understand why he/she is being killed.

### **At the chicken farm**

Broiler chickens – Baby chicks are separated from their mother at birth and kept in very crowded cages where there is literally no room to move. Some of these animals become severely depressed and feel intense stress, so they react by pecking each other and themselves. To prevent this from happening, the farmers sever the chicks' beaks. There is no anaesthesia; there is even a machine that cuts off their beaks. These animals live in extremely filthy conditions. Diseases abound. The overuse of growth hormones causes organ failure and the inability of their legs to support their body weight. Some of the chickens (ducks and turkeys, too) are forced through tubes inserted into their throats. Finally, in a matter of 45 days or less, they are sent for slaughter where, in some cases, their throats are cut and they are left to bleed to death.

Poultry chickens – Hens are starved to increase egg production.

The injured are left to die. Male chicks are ground up as animal feed because they cannot produce eggs.

## **At the pig farm**

Piglets are separated from their mother at birth. The mother-pigs cry when their babies are separated from them. The piglets' teeth and tails are forcibly yanked off with pliers, the male pigs' testicles are torn out by force. Again, this is to prevent the piglets from biting each other and themselves, so all possible extensions from their little bodies and their teeth are removed. Sows are artificially impregnated with insufficient recovery time. They live in crowded enclosures with no room to turn around or lie down. After several pregnancies, when the sow can no longer produce piglets, they are sent for slaughter. Even during transportation to the slaughterhouse, conditions are extremely crowded, and this sometimes results in death. Slaughter can sometimes be very inhumane; the pigs' throats are cut and they bleed to death. Their limbs are severed piece by piece while they are still alive. The injured and diseased ones are left to die of starvation.

## **At the dairy and cattle farm**

Dairy cows – Dairy cows are hooked onto machines all their lives where their milk is extracted 24 hours a day. They are killed after 4-5 years when they can no longer produce milk. Some are made into soup, animal food or low-grade hamburgers. Male calves (veal) from dairy farms are

separated from their mothers at one-day old and kept in tiny enclosures that have never seen the light of day. They are fed a liquid which is deficient in iron and fibre. This is done to ensure that their flesh would be tender and their leather pale in colour. That is why veals are known as “tortured calves”.

Cattle – The horns of these cows and bulls are pulled out by force to prevent them from butting each other. During transportation, there is sometimes no food and water for hours. There is overcrowding in the trucks and old cows starve to death. Slaughter is inhumane; their limbs are severed piece by piece while they are still alive.

*Think occasionally of the suffering  
of which you spare yourself the sight.*

– Albert Schweitzer

Looking at the terribly crowded conditions that these poor farm animals are kept in, it is no surprise, therefore, that diseases abound in the farms. We hear of the Japanese Encephalitis in pigs, the Mad Cow Disease and the Bird Flu. When there are such outbreaks, the poor animals are culled, sometimes in a very brutal and inhumane manner. We blame them for causing the outbreak of diseases, but aren't we the actual culprits?

## **At the fish farm**

Even fish slaughtering can be very inhumane. The fish is sometimes killed by crushing its head with a mallet. Even

before they are killed, “fish grading” can be a very stressful and frightening process for the fish. “Death crown” is a term to describe how the head of the fish is intentionally mutilated by parasites causing fish to be in deep pain.

## **Out in the ocean**

Sharks’ fins are severed and the sharks are thrown back into the sea to die a slow death by drowning, because they can no longer swim without their fins. Dolphins and turtles are sometimes trapped in fishing nets resulting in their deaths.

## **Just before slaughter**

I read from somewhere that just before slaughter, the animal is so frightened that its body would generate large amounts of adrenaline (the fight-or-flight hormone). Some of the animals are not even dead yet when they are skinned and dismembered; this gives rise to even larger amounts of the hormone. This excessive adrenaline remains in the dead animal which then becomes the meat that is eaten. Excessive adrenaline is toxic.

I know many people justify meat-eating by saying that the manner in which the animals are slaughtered is “humane”. My contention is how can any form of killing ever be humane?

*Recognize meat for what it really is: the antibiotic-  
and pesticide-laden corpse of a tortured animal.*

– Ingrid Newkirk

For more information on what goes on in the slaughterhouses, please refer to [www.meat.org](http://www.meat.org).

\* \* \*

You have survived through the most “difficult” chapter in the book. It took me a lot of courage to actually write it. These graphic details have to be told so that you know how meat is produced. And, believe it or not, what I have written has already been toned down. I would also need to qualify that whatever is described in this chapter may not happen in all farms, but killing, in any manner, is still killing. Being killed is very frightening when one does not understand why one is being killed – the farm animals face this heart-wrenching situation, by the billions. We can make a difference to some of them by simply eating less meat. That’s all it takes, really. If everyone eats a little less meat, many animals would not have to be bred to be slaughtered as meat.

A friend who read this chapter before I sent it in for publication said she would drop chicken, pork and beef from her diet and only eat fish now, plus lots of vegetables, of course!

*I'm no shrinking violet. I played hockey until half my teeth were knocked down my throat. And I'm extremely competitive on a tennis court... But that experience at the slaughterhouse overwhelmed me. When I walked out of there, I knew I would never again harm an animal! I knew all the physiological, economic, and ecological arguments supporting vegetarianism, but it was firsthand experience of man's cruelty to animals that laid the real groundwork for my commitment to vegetarianism.*

- Peter Burwash, champion tennis player in his book, "A Vegetarian Primer".

# 5 Lessons from the Cows and the Crabs

*I think that spiritual growth compels us at a certain point  
to stop killing our fellow creatures for the satisfaction  
of our physical wants.*

– Mahatma Gandhi

There are four stories here, and they are remarkably similar in nature, yet they must be told.

## **The Slaughterhouse Worker and the Animals**

Way back when we were living in the small town of Kuala Kangsar, my parents knew a person who worked in the local slaughterhouse. There came a point in time in his life when this person wanted to seek a more spiritual life, so that was the time he befriended my parents. Through them, he learnt that animals have feelings too – they may not be able to rationalize as intelligently as we can, but they are capable of feelings like love, loyalty, sadness and fear. He reflected on his experience in the slaughterhouse, and he totally agreed. He told my parents how the animals would cry and howl every morning at 5am as he carted them down the aisle to

be slaughtered. He even told them he had difficulty sleeping at night as he would hear the animals' cries in the still of the night. He realized then that that was the reason he had never been able to sleep peacefully. After some time, he changed jobs and became a much happier person.

## **The Convicted Murderer and the Cow**

This is a story I heard from an Australian monk. This monk goes into the prisons to help rehabilitate the prisoners and some of these inmates range from the mild-mannered to the most hardcore convicted criminals.

One such prisoner was this extremely hardcore murderer who had previously killed quite a number of people. Now, over in the Australian prisons, the prisoners have to work for their sustenance, and part of this work includes having to plant their own vegetables, rear their own animals or work at the slaughterhouse.

Mr Hardcore decided he'd do the job of the slaughter-man. That would be the "executioner", so to speak – the person who stuns the animals and kills them after they are carted down the aisle every morning.

Mr Hardcore had no qualms about killing animals. After all, hadn't he already killed a few humans before he was arrested and thrown into the slammer? Humans, animals – what's the difference, he thought. Killing is killing, and he could do it without blinking an eye.

So, day in, day out, Mr Hardcore went about his job dutifully. One shot to stun, one shot to kill. It was routine. The animals would be howling, screaming and crying for mercy, but Mr Hardcore was unmoved. Until....

One day, the cows were howling and crying as usual as they came down the aisle. But there was this one cow who was absolutely calm as it neared her turn.

Mr Hardcore could not help noticing her unusual and almost frightening calmness.

When it came to her turn, the cow looked straight into Mr Hardcore's eyes...and tears rolled down her face.

There wasn't a sound. Just tears.

Mr Hardcore was stunned. Immediately, he dropped the stun-gun and ran out of the slaughterhouse, yelling, "I've had enough of killing!! I've had enough of killing!". From that moment on, Mr Hardcore declared he would be a lifelong vegetarian.

It took a cow to give a hardcore criminal a moment of enlightenment which changed his entire life.

## **The Chef and the Crabs**

This is a story of my friend, Ah Seong, who now runs a vegetarian food stall with his mother in the foodcourt near my workplace. One day, Ah Seong came to sit with me as I was

having lunch at his stall, and he told me his story. He said, “Do you know, sister...I used to be a bigtime gourmet chef in my heyday. I earned thousands. But, one day, someone took me to a talk and this lady-speaker spoke about the moral wrongness in killing. After listening to that talk, I could not sleep peacefully at night. I kept seeing the live crabs and fish that I clobber to death every day in the restaurant. I couldn’t even do my job properly anymore at the restaurant, and this affected my livelihood. So I went back to the lady and told her it was all *her* fault for causing me this misery and ill-fortune. I told her she had to solve my problem for me now. The lady said: No worries, I’ll teach you how to cook vegetarian dishes.”

And so, Ah Seong learnt the art of vegetarian cooking and perfected the skill in no time. He then opened his vegetarian food stall with the help of his mother. Never mind if he did not earn as much as he used to, but at least he could now sleep peacefully at night.

Ah Seong then proudly told me that he used to have very bad eczema all over his body that no doctor could cure. The rashes would flare up and the itch would be unbearable. But, ever since he switched his culinary skills over to cooking vegetarian, his eczema disappeared! I looked at Ah Seong, and his face shone with a radiance that could only come from a kind heart. He had found happiness in his job now and is enjoying better health, and all it took was a lady-speaker who spoke from her heart and a young man who was willing to look deep within and find the truths in *his* heart!

## The Aged Loyal Cow

This is a story from my colleague, Jas. Jas grew up in Sarawak. Her parents were dairy farmers. They kept cows to provide milk for the family and also to generate income. Their cows lived a long life and, even when they could not provide anymore milk, Jas' parents continued looking after them until they passed on.

One day, many years after having served the family, one cow developed a bad infection on her front hoof. Apparently, such an infection is very hard to heal and would cause great pain. Many farmers would sell these cows to the butcher rather than nurse them.

One such opportunist-butcher came to know about this cow with the infected hoof and offered Jas' parents a fair price to purchase the cow.

Jas' parents, despite being in need of the money, flatly refused to sell the cow. They told the butcher, "This cow has served my family and provided milk for my children for so many years. How can we sell her now that she is old and injured?"

After the butcher went away, the cow walked towards Jas' parents.

She held up her injured hoof.

And she cried.

I would like to believe these were tears of gratitude.

The cow lived on until she finally passed on peacefully at a ripe old age.

I think I will let these three cows and those crabs speak for the billions of animals who are born and bred to be killed in the slaughterhouses as food for humans.

*The question is not, Can they reason?  
nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?*

– Jeremy Bentham.

*Animals share with us the privilege of having a soul.*

– Pythagoras

Are you ready to eat less meat now?

If so, please read on...



## Going Meatless Once a Week

On 12 May 2009, the city of Ghent in Belgium declared a meatless day (Meatless Thursday) once a week in their city. I believe they were the first city in the world to officially declare a once-a-week meatless day. Other cities in Belgium followed after that. Cape Town was the first African city to declare a Meatless Monday too.

On 30 June 2011, a total of 29 organizations in Singapore (including a student environment group in the National University) endorsed a Veggie Thursday where participations would go completely meatless for just one meal every Thursday.

Going veggie once a week has been an age-old practice amongst many Hindus and some Christians. It is also a Chinese cultural practice to go vegetarian twice a month (on the new moon and full moon day).

Former US President Bill Clinton has recently adopted a vegan diet. While many people adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet to reduce their carbon footprint or for health reasons, which are all valid and noble reasons, let's also consider it from the compassionate viewpoint. Animals suffer so much

in the factory farms and slaughterhouses. Let's reduce their suffering by eating less meat so that the number of animals born and bred to be slaughtered can at least be reduced.

I read that 269 million chickens are killed each day in the US alone. What about the cows, pigs, goats and other meat-producing animals? And these are not free-range animals who have lived a natural life, but animals that are born and bred (in terrible conditions) for one sole purpose – to be slaughtered as food for us.

I know it isn't easy to drop meat entirely from our diet and go veggie immediately. Some people, depending on their body constituency, might also need some meat in their diet. The Dalai Lama, for example, was a lifelong vegetarian, but his doctor advised him to take some meat since his health required it, so he does that now. But minimally, of course.

Hence, for many of us, it may not be easy or feasible for us to be strict vegetarians. If that is the case, why not go meatless once a week, for a start? Then, if we like what we do and we see the benefit of doing it, we could gradually increase it to twice or thrice a week!

## Let's Just Do it!

If you're all motivated to go meatless once a week or reduce your meat intake every day, let's get started now.

Whenever you're supposed to go meatless but you feel the urge to revert to eating meat, think of how the animal would be slaughtered and how much it would suffer. Then, remind yourself that you are a kind person and you do not want to contribute to the suffering of these poor animals. Your conscience will discipline your heart, your mind and your tongue. Believe me, this really works! It wasn't easy for me to convert to forgoing meat initially too, and that was when I realized how much I needed to discipline my tongue and my brain! Ultimately, your heart will speak to you. Listen to your heart...it knows the truths.

If you simply cannot go meatless, then reduce your meat intake. Instead of having two types of meats, cut it down to one. Instead of having chunks of meat, use sprinkles of minced meat. Use meat as a condiment and not as the main dish. When eating out, choose dishes that have lesser amounts of meat. Here's a good guideline: Get meat out of the centre of the plate.

## What to eat

Eat fruit on an empty stomach, in between meals. Not as dessert.

For your meals, eat a variety of vegetables: 5-6 different colours would be good. For example, you can stir-fry a mixed veggie dish of cauliflower, carrot, red capsicum, pumpkin, broccoli, and brinjal. Make sure you always eat a green leafy vegetable every meal.

Chew slowly. If you gulp down your food, you'll definitely end up eating more. By chewing slowly, your digestion would be better as it begins with the saliva in your mouth.

Avoid excessive soya and gluten products, and PLEASE avoid those fake “vegetarian meats”. I was told these heavily seasoned fake meats are even more toxic than real meat itself!

My personal favourites are home-made vegetable soup, stir-fried mixed vegetables, and, if I eat out, Indian vegetarian dishes.

Remember that going veggie means eating a variety of vegetables. There is no need for fake meats.

## 8 Of Onions, Garlic and Special Chopsticks

I'm often asked in my public talks why some vegetarians abstain from onions and garlic. Well, as far as I've been told, there are two reasons: First, these condiments give us a rather unpleasant breath. To put it bluntly, it stinks up our mouths! For monks and nuns who would want to do chanting after eating, it would be quite embarrassing if one belches in the company of others, especially during a chanting session. Second, I was told that onions and garlic are aphrodisiacs. Many vegetarians are aiming to become more spiritual in their way of life, renouncing sense pleasures and the likes of it, hence, aphrodisiacs won't be very helpful in this department.

Then, there are those who insist on special cooking utensils, special crockery and special cutlery for them to go vegetarian. Ahh...I will reserve my comments on this, but for me this is unnecessary. Eating a vegetarian meal means not eating meat. Never mind if the utensil has been used for meats before. But that's just my opinion, of course.

So, yes, I *do* eat onions and garlic, and I only need one dining set at home!

*Think of the fierce energy concentrated in an acorn! You bury it in the ground, and it explodes into an oak! Bury a sheep, and nothing happens but decay.*

– George Bernard Shaw

## Hara Hachi Bu

*Hara Hachi Bu* means eat until you are 80% full.

Instead of adopting a meatless day once a week, you could also opt to just consciously reduce your meat consumption every day.

The traditional Okinawa diet, with its emphasis on vegetables, whole grains, fruits, legumes and fish with limited amounts of lean meats, serves as a model for healthy eating and healthy aging. It is purported to reduce our risk of cardiovascular disease, and it also helps to minimize free radical production.

Stopping at 80% capacity is actually a very good strategy to avoid obesity without going hungry, because the stomach's receptors take about 20 minutes to tell the body how full it really is. So when you *feel* 80% full, you are actually *already* full!

In Okinawa, heart disease rates are 80% lower, and stroke rates are also lower than in the US. Cholesterol levels are typically under 180, homocystein levels are low and blood pressure is at goal levels. Rates of cancer are 50-80% lower – especially breast, colon, ovarian and prostate cancer. Hip fractures are 20% lower than mainland Japanese and 40% lower than in the US. Dementia is rare.

However, Okinawans who adopt Western eating styles have similar rates of heart disease as in the US. Young Okinawans, eating more processed foods, have a higher risk of heart disease than their elderly relatives. A study of 100,000 Okinawans who moved to Brazil and adopted local eating habits showed a life expectancy 17 years lower than in Okinawa.

The Okinawans are known to be the longest-living and healthiest humans on Earth.

The longer we live healthily, the more good we can do.

So, let's *hara hachi bu*, and eat less meat!

# 10 The PB&J Club (for the Young-at-Heart)

## **How One Lunch Helps the Environment AND Saves Animal Lives!**

It's all based on eating *lower on the food chain*. Everything we eat comes from plants. No matter what you eat – beef or barley, chicken or chickpeas, pork or peanut butter – *all of it comes from plants*. We eat some plants directly – the vegetables, the peanut butter – and we eat some of it converted by animals into meat, eggs and milk.

### **Animals are inefficient at converting energy**

The basic problem is that animals are inefficient at converting plants into meat, milk, and eggs. Relatively little of what *they* eat ends up in what *you* eat because animals use their food to keep them alive – to fuel their muscles so they can stand up and walk around, to keep their hearts beating, to keep their brains working.

The result is that it takes several pounds of corn and soy to produce one pound of meat, or one pound of eggs, one pound of milk, etc. The same goes for protein, other nutrients or calories.

It also takes several times more resources than what it took to grow those plants: several times more land; several times more water; a lot more fertilizers and pesticides; not to mention diesel and gasoline to operate the machinery, pump the water for irrigation and produce the chemicals.

What about seafood? Skip the fish and prawns and help the planet just like you do by avoiding other animal products. It takes a lot of fuel to catch fish. We catch about half of the seafood we eat, and that fishing produces greenhouse gases because fishing boats use fuel.

### **Concerned about the environment?**

If you would like to slow global warming, do your part to save water, slow deforestation and overgrazing, and cut back on the pesticides and fertilizers used to grow your food, what you could do is to change your lunch today (or tomorrow, if you're reading this after lunch).

### **Make a difference one lunch at a time**

Every time you eat lunch, you've got the option of cutting out the middleman, or the middle-cow, middle-chicken or middle-pig, and helping the environment.

This is where it gets *really easy*.

Pack a peanut butter and jelly (PB&J) sandwich instead of buying a lunch based on animal products, like a meatburger,

fried chicken or tuna sandwich. Want to do more? Have another PB&J sandwich tomorrow.

Tired of eating the same thing....?

Make your own veggie sandwich!

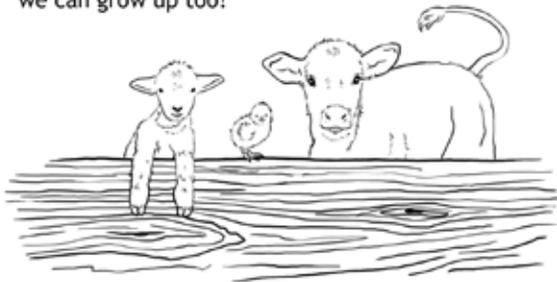
All you need is bread, butter/mayonaise/tomato sauce, lettuce, cucumber, carrot, tomato, or any of your favourite vegetables. Be creative! Have fun!!

## **Concerned about animals in our food system?**

If every meatburger, box of chicken nuggets, or *bak kut teh* meal is a signal to slaughter more cows, chickens or pigs (by way of telling the restaurant or the market to buy more meat), a meal that doesn't have any animal products is a vote to stop.

Animals endure so much suffering in the modern-day factory farms. Let's help them by not eating them, shall we?

Thank you for not eating us so that  
we can grow up too!



Not everyone can change their entire diet, but every decision like that, where you eat a meal based on plants instead of one based on animals, has a *big* environmental impact and is a vote *for* animal welfare. You are saving lives. You are practising compassion!

*As custodians of the planet it is our responsibility to deal with all species with kindness, love, and compassion. That these animals suffer through human cruelty is beyond understanding. Please help to stop this madness.*

– Richard Gere

**Websites to motivate you:**

[www.loveusnoteatus.com](http://www.loveusnoteatus.com)

[www.thematrix.com](http://www.thematrix.com)

[www.meat.org](http://www.meat.org)



## Of Aliens and Futuristic Apes

After I completed the first draft for this book, I sent it to my friend, Andy Koh of PetFinder.my, for feedback since Andy had indicated to me some months back that he was supportive of eating less meat.

Andy sent me very constructive feedback and further thoughts on this issue, which I'd like to share with you in this chapter.

Here are Andy's thoughts:

*One key reason why meat consumption has increased significantly is our conditioning by the meat-producing industry for their financial benefits. They are making meat so abundant and affordable by introducing mass-production methods – at the expense of the animals' well-being and humane treatment.*

*Second is the powerful marketing-in-action. From elegantly packaged meat at the supermarkets to fun-filled experience at fast-food chains to delicacies portrayed as prime at fine dining restaurants, people are far detached and shielded from the ground zero cruelty of how the animals are treated before ending up on their plates.*

*For those of my friends that cannot properly visualize the cruelty of eating animals, I like to tell them a slightly gross Alien Invasion Theory:*

*Imagine Earth was invaded by carnivorous aliens that consider humans as delicious food. We are being hoarded into pens packed with thousands of people lined up every single day to be decapitated, skinned alive or have our throats slit, and to have our bodies dismembered, packaged and graded separately for sale. Babies a few months old are taken away, fried crispy and served as a delicacy (think suckling pig, or spring chicken). Food stalls have half-mutilated human bodies hanging around for aliens to choose the parts they'd like to devour.*

*This is exactly what we're doing to the animals every day, but we do not see anything wrong with it as we're always on the winning side of the bargain.*

*Then again, on the contrary, when animal lovers tell me how disgusted and inhumane people are in eating dogs and cats (as some people in certain cultures do), I would tell them that is only as wrong or as right as us eating pigs, cows, sheep or chickens. We only feel disgusted because we are very emotionally attached to dogs and cats as pets, but the lives of other animals we eat are in no way less precious nor are they dumber or deserve to die more. So, whether we eat a dog, cat, chicken or cow, we are still equally as bad or good.*

*If children grew up with cows and pigs as friends, I doubt they would ever want to eat these animals.*

You are absolutely right, Andy. I've always felt that way, too. Meat-eaters cry foul when they hear of other humans eating dogs and cats but do not realize that they themselves eat chickens, cows, pigs and goats. That is precisely why my vet, a dog- and cat-lover, does not despise people who consume dogs and cats. He says he has no right to do so when he himself is a meat-eater.

This also brings to mind a young boy who attended one of my talks. I had asked for a show of hands to see who, amongst the audience, were animal-lovers. The boy later told me that, although he loved cats and dogs, he could not bring himself to say he was an animal-lover because he still ate meat (other animals). I told him I salute him for his honesty, something I seldom see in adults.

As for Andy's alien invasion theory, I love that too! In my first book, *Pawprints on My Heart*, written in 2008, I shared a similar alien story taken from the Vegetarian Society of Singapore:

*Humans eat other animals for food, even though we humans can be perfectly healthy without eating meat. We continue to eat other animals despite the fact that these fellow animals are thinking, feeling beings who suffer greatly, who are deprived of any semblance of a natural life. Why do we humans do this to other animals? One reason we continue to unnecessarily use other animals for food is that we have the ability to do so; our intellectual gifts have allowed us to achieve dominance over other animals.*

*One way to help humans empathise with the plight of our fellow animals would be to encourage us to imagine another species coming to Earth, a species more intelligent than humans, a species who decide to eat us because we taste so good, a species that can do with us what they want because they are more intelligent. The members of this species don't hate humans; in fact, they think we're cute, at least some of us. Furthermore, this species aren't monsters, any more than we humans are monsters because we eat other animals. It's just that eating humans has become a tradition for them; it's what they're accustomed to. It's easy and convenient, plus, many of their doctors tell them that human meat has lots of essential nutrients. (VSS eNewsletter (2007)).*

Remember the movie *Planet of the Apes*? Way back in the early seventies, it was my all-time favourite movie. The movie was so popular, it had four sequels and even became a television series. At the point of writing this book, a remake has just hit the silver screen.

The original 1968 movie tells the story of an astronaut crew who crash-land on a strange planet (which they later found out was our Earth) in the distant future. Although the planet appears desolate at first, the surviving crew members stumble upon a society in which apes have evolved into creatures with human-like intelligence and speech. The apes have assumed the role of the dominant species and humans are mute animals.

In the series, the apes did not eat humans (because apes are vegetarians!). Rather, their scientists kept humans in cages and used them as specimens for testing in their laboratories (exactly as how humans use guinea pigs, rabbits, monkeys, dogs and cats for animal-testing). They also used humans in sport-hunting, like what humans have been doing for ages in fox-hunting.

When I watched the movies and the subsequent television series, I remember overhearing some adults saying that the apes were such “savages”. How could they do such things to the humans, they bellowed. As a child, I did wonder why these adults did not reflect on how we humans have been (mis)treating animals. What the apes did were exactly what we humans have been doing to the animals for a long, long time. Why couldn't they see this?

I also read that when the Nazis used human-Jews for testing at their laboratories during World War II, the world was appalled at such “uncivilized and brutal” acts, yet isn’t this exactly what (civilized) scientists do with animals in the laboratories – pump chemicals into their eyes, stick electrodes into their brains, lop off their limbs, while they scream in pain and agony?

Animal-testing (or vivisection) is another issue which I speak out against. With modern technology and advances in medical science, there are alternatives to animal-testing for our food and drugs. Qualitative Structure-Analysis Relationship (QSAR) uses mathematical modelling to calculate the efficacy of a product. Using cultured human tissue is another alternative, and would definitely be more accurate too, since we are biologically different from rodents and other animals. Why are we testing our products on animals when they are so different from us? Is it because supplying animals to the laboratories is yet another money-making venture for humans? What works for the animals may not work for us, as proven, so tragically, in a drug developed way back in the fifties to combat the effects of morning sickness in pregnant women. This drug worked beautifully when tested on animals, but became a disaster when used on humans. It was reported in 46 countries that thousands of babies whose mothers had taken this drug were born with deformed limbs, fingers and toes. The deformity did not happen when tested on animals, but it did when used on humans. One wonders if there was a retributive factor at play here...

Animal-testing is required by legislation before a drug can be approved, but some scientists and biotechnologists are of the opinion that animal-testing is not necessary.

*I have studied the question of vivisection for thirty-five years and am convinced that experiments on living animals are leading medicine further and further from the real cure of the patient. I know of no instance of animal experiment that has been necessary for the advancement of medical science; still less do I know of any animal experiment that could conceivably be necessary to save human life.*

– H. Fergie Woods, M.D.

Consider the following facts taken from <http://whitecoatwelfare.org/aat-text.shtml>: Penicillin kills cats and guinea pigs but has saved many human lives.

1. Arsenic is not poisonous to rats, mice or sheep but is deadly to humans.
2. Morphine is a sedative for humans but a stimulant for cats, goats and horses.
3. Digitalis dangerously raises blood pressure in dogs but continues to save countless cardiac human patients by lowering heart rate.

*Animal experiments confuse the issues and their results will never have scientific precision. There is absolutely no connection between vivisection and human health. The general belief in the value of animal experimentation is the result of brainwashing that the public has been submitted to for a long time. Behind*

*it are the pharmaceutical industries, which spend fortunes on publicity and finance the research institutes and the universities.*

– Arie Brecher, M.D.

As for using animals to test cosmetics, there are many companies that do not use animal-testing anymore these days. Patronize and support these companies, please. Animals are tortured and mutilated for the sake of human vanity. It doesn't make sense to me why they have to die just because we want to look more beautiful. That is why I made the decision not to use cosmetics when I was fourteen. I only use toothpaste, soap and shampoo, and only those that have not been tested on animals. For me, there is no need to look younger than my age. I want to grow old gracefully!

Animals are already suffering so badly and being killed to provide food for us, they should not have to be tortured for the sake of our vanity. Remember that these poor guinea pigs, rabbits, monkeys, dogs and cats are bred for this purpose and they endure agonizing pain while being trapped in stereotaxic devices in the laboratories.

And what about the cows, crocodiles, snakes, minks and dogs that are being skinned alive to provide leather for handbags, furs and other products. There is practically no end of ways humans exploit, ill-treat and mutilate animals to satisfy their wants.

On this note, Albert Schweitzer, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1952, hit the nail on head when he said:

*Until we stop harming all other living beings,  
we are still savages.*

– Albert Schweitzer

My parents had a friend who simply refused to wear or use leather. He wore sneakers to work (I do that, too!). He was making his personal statement for animals just as I make my personal statement by refusing to wear cosmetics. If you feel strongly for the animals, make your personal statement and lead by example. Never underestimate what one person can do or how a gesture, no matter how small, can make an impactful difference.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can change the world.  
In fact, it's the only thing that ever has.*

– Margaret Mead

In 2001, *Planet of the Apes* was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant”.

Personally, I think the movie is *very* culturally significant.

It offers us the opportunity to open up our minds and reflect upon how we humans, as a race, have been exploiting and ill-treating, or, to put it bluntly, *bullying* the animals, just because we are bigger, stronger and more capable of rational-thinking and using tools.

We often claim to be superior to the animals, but should that superiority only be measured in might and cognitive intelligence? What happened to superiority in compassion and love? That, in my opinion, should be the measure of humanity.

Are we able to put ourselves in their place, and feel for them? Are we able to put aside our own needs and selfish desires, and make some sacrifices to reduce their suffering?

Christiaan Barnard, the South African cardiac surgeon who performed the world's first human-to-human heart transplant, shares his experience:

*I had bought two male chimps from a primate colony in Holland. They lived next to each other in separate cages for several months before I used one as a [heart] donor. When we put him to sleep in his cage in preparation for the operation, he chattered and cried incessantly. We attached no significance to this, but it must have made a great impression on his companion, for when we removed the body to the operating room, the other chimp wept bitterly and was inconsolable for days. The incident made a deep impression on me. I vowed never again to experiment with such sensitive creatures.*

I believe it is not just chimpanzees alone that can feel and suffer emotional heartache. All animals can, because all animals are also feeling beings, just like us.

*Now what is it that moves our very heart, and sickens us so much at cruelty shown to poor brutes? First, that they have done us no harm; next that they have no power whatever to resistance; it is*

*the cowardice and tyranny of which they are the victims which  
makes their suffering so especially touching.*

– Cardinal Newman

*Once you admit that we have the right to inflict unnecessary suffering,  
you destroy the very basis of a humane society.*

– John Galsworthy

Before I get carried away with aliens and futuristic apes, allow  
me now to get back to Earth and address the connection  
between meat-eating and our carbon footprint...

# 12 Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

Our carbon footprint is a measure of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by us. This carbon footprint collectively contributes to global warming.

Shortly after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was co-awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, they issued a report which said that if we want to help put a brake on global warming, there are three essential things which we must embrace in our daily lives:

- (1) Don't eat meat.
- (2) Ride a bike.
- (3) Be a frugal shopper.

Not that difficult to do, is it? We could gradually reduce our meat intake for a start (and gain better health), cycle to nearby places (and gain better health too), and buy only essential things (and save money!). Isn't that a win-win situation for us and the environment?

Dr Rajendra Pachauri, one of the two recipients of the coveted Nobel Peace Prize, in his acceptance speech in Oslo, Norway, attributes his life-long philosophy to the Hindu principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. It means "the whole universe is one

family”, and hence global efforts must be garnered to protect global commons.

Reducing our meat intake and the use of motorized vehicles, and buying only what we really need (not what we want) *can* significantly reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that come from the animal-farming and meat industry, the use of vehicles and the manufacture of goods.

Reducing our meat intake also contributes significantly to slowing down the death of our planet.

**Deforestation** – Between 1960 and 1985, nearly 40 percent of all Central American rain forests were destroyed to create pasture for beef cattle.

**Soil erosion** – More than 4 million acres of cropland are lost to erosion in the US every year. Of this staggering topsoil loss, 85 percent is directly associated with livestock raising, i.e. over-grazing.

**Pollution of rivers/lakes/seas** – Much of the excrement from animal farming (which amounts to 20 times as much faecal matter as human waste) flows unfiltered into our lakes and streams.

*Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.*

– Albert Einstein

# 13 All it Takes is Just 10%

I read that if people in the US were to reduce just 10% of their total meat intake (which could mean going meatless for one meal per week), it would free as much as 12 million tonnes of grains. This is enough to feed all the hungry and starving people in the world. World hunger would then disappear altogether.

Consider this fact: It takes 10kg of plant protein (grains) to produce 1kg of animal protein through the meat industry. By doing so, we effectively lose 90% of the energy value of the original crop. Doesn't it then make more sense for us to eat less meat so that the grains can be channeled to feed more humans and fewer animals need to be bred for slaughter?

This is how the meat industry works: Grains are used to feed the animals. The animals are slaughtered to provide meat for humans. In the process of doing this, large amounts of energy is wasted, and large amounts of greenhouse gases are also emitted.

According to a report published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the livestock sector generates 18% of greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. That's more than the pollution generated

by transport. It is also a major source of land and water degradation.

My friend, Andy, alerted me to this very interesting newly released July 2011 report on carbon footprint of eating meat by the Environmental Working Group:

<http://breakingnews.ewg.org/meateatersguide/a-meat-eaters-guide-to-climate-change-health-what-you-eat-matters/>

They listed some fun facts of what can be achieved over a year:

- If you eat one less burger a week, it's like taking your car off the road for 320 miles or line-drying your clothes half the time.
- If your four-person family skips meat and cheese one day a week, it's like taking your car off the road for five weeks – or reducing everyone's daily showers by 3 minutes.
- If your four-person family skips steak once a week, it's like taking your car off the road for nearly three months.
- If everyone in the US ate no meat or cheese just one day a week, it would be like not driving 91 billion miles – or taking 7.6 million cars off the road.

# 14 Of Slaughterhouses and Battlefields

*As long as there are slaughterhouses, there will be battlefields.*

– Leo Tolstoy

*For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other.*

– Pythagoras

There is a hypothesis that if humans can be kind to animals, there is a greater likelihood that they too would be kind to other humans. An international team of scientists has found that vegans and vegetarians are more empathetic to both human and animal suffering than non-vegetarians. In this study, empathy quotient (“EQ”) was measured through a 60-question test, and researchers used functional MRI to observe brain activity while the subject was shown a variety of images, including images of human and animal suffering.

Researchers started with the hypothesis that ethical vegans and vegetarians may experience empathy differently from non-vegetarians, because the vegans and vegetarians in the study had all chosen their diets based on certain moral beliefs. They were correct. The study found that both vegans and vegetarians had a higher empathy than non-vegetarians when

shown images of human and animal suffering. Interestingly, the study found that both vegans and vegetarians had more empathy for non-human animals than for humans!

The information above is extracted from <http://animalrights.about.com/b/2010/06/03/vegans-and-vegetarians-have-more-empathy.htm>

*Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them,  
but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission –  
to be of service to them wherever they require it.*

*If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures  
from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will  
deal likewise with their fellow men.*

– Francis of Assisi

You might also have noticed that vegetarian animals like the giraffe, deer, sheep and cow are tame and mild-mannered while carnivorous animals like the lion, tiger, shark, snake and T-Rex are ferocious. Interestingly, vegetarian animals also generally have a much longer lifespan compared with their carnivorous friends of the same size (see the chapter on lifespan comparison).

Hmm...eat less meat, live longer, do more good with our lives? That sure sounds like quite a good deal, doesn't it?

## 15 The Compassion of a Great King

According to the history books, King Asoka of the Mauryan Dynasty in ancient India was a ruthless warrior. But shortly after conquering Kalinga, he realised the error of his ways. And upon his conversion to Buddhism, he introduced many changes to influence the Indian society to be more compassionate, often leading by example.

On one of his many famous rock edicts, thus it is written:

*Hundreds of thousands of living creatures were formerly slaughtered every day for curries in the kitchens of his Majesty. As this edict is being inscribed, only three living beings are killed daily: two peacocks and one deer. And the deer is not slaughtered regularly. In the future, not even these three animals will be slaughtered.*

It was recorded that 2000 animals used to be slaughtered daily at the King's palace for the consumption of his family and the staff at the palace. Upon the King's decision to practise compassion to animals, the 2000 animals were drastically reduced to only three, and from three to almost zero.

Such was the compassion of a great king.

*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,  
as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other.*

– Henry David Thoreau

Some people argue that as long as they do not do the killing, meat-eating is justified and they have not contributed in any way to the killing. That, of course, is a matter of personal opinion. But the supply-demand theory still holds. The killing will not stop until the eating stops.

*All beings fear death.  
Putting oneself in the place of another,  
one should not kill or cause others to kill.*

– The Buddha

Not only did King Asoka promote vegetarianism to his people by setting a shining example, he also forbade the mutilation, hunting and sacrifice of animals. He built hospitals for animals, planted Banyan trees along the roads to provide shade for them, built watering holes for them to drink from, had a team of officers who would feed the animals in the jungle and protected mother-animals and their young in special enclosures during the nursing period. Soon after, the *Cakkavatti* Kings in ancient Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Indo-China region followed in King Asoka's footsteps. Some even became veterinarians to serve the animals. These kings built the first wild life sanctuaries in the world. Their people avoided hunting and fishing and were largely vegetarians.

All these changed when colonization set in.

*If you want to know why there are wars in the world, just listen to the cries from the slaughterhouse at night. Eating animals for food has numbed our hearts to the suffering of other living beings.*

*It is truly inhumane. We must cease the killing of animals and cherish all lives---not just the lives of human beings but the lives of all beings. Everything has a life of its own, be it the trees or the mountains, and taking good care of them in fact safeguards our own health.*

– Master Cheng Yan

*Vegetarianism preserves life, health, peace, the ecology, creates a more equitable distribution of resources, helps to feed the hungry, encourages nonviolence for the animal and human members of the planet, and is a powerful aid for the spiritual transformation of the body, emotions, mind, and spirit.*

– Gabriel Cousens

# 16 Who Lives Longer?

## **Mammals**

Elephant – 70 years  
 Camel – 50 years  
 Horse – 50 years  
 Orang Utan – 50 years  
 Tyrannosaurus-Rex – 45 years  
 Deer- 35 years  
 Lion – 35 years  
 Tiger – 25 years  
 Wolf – 16 years  
 Fox – 14 years

## **Marine Animals**

Whale – 116 years  
 Shark – 30 years

## **Reptiles**

Tortoise – 152 years  
 Turtle – 123 years  
 Alligator – 63 years  
 Crocodile – 45 years  
 Cobra – 28 years

## **Birds**

Swan – 102 years  
 Eagle – 55 years  
 Vulture – 39 years

It appears from the list above that vegetarian animals generally have a longer lifespan compared with carnivorous animals of the same size and species. Some of the animals on the list may not be strict vegetarians and are actually omnivores. We humans are also omnivores, but I have a feeling that at the rate the modern-day human devours meat, we may just be eating more meat than the lions and tigers!

Animals eat only when hungry. Humans eat for pleasure. Check out any RM50++ eat-all-you-can buffet on a weekend,

and you'll see what I mean. For some, it is all about queuing up before the doors open, and having brunch, lunch, high-tea and an early dinner, all rolled into one. And one wonders why obesity, heart diseases, high cholesterol, diabetes and cancer are on the rise!

Eat to live, or live to eat?

The choice is ours.



## Famous Vegetarians

**Peace-loving vegetarians** – Mahatma Gandhi, Aung Sang Suu Kyi, Rosa Parks, Jane Goodall, Princess Diana, etc.

**Pure genius vegetarians** – Albert Einstein, Pythagoras, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Darwin, Plato, Sir Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, Confucius, Nikola Tesla, Ramanujan, Leo Tolstoy, Albert Schweitzer, Rabindranath Tagore, George Bernard Shaw, Anthony Robbins, Steve Jobs, Kalpana Chawla, etc. (many of them are Nobel Prize laureates)

**Sportspeople vegetarians** – Martina Navratilova (nine time Wimbledon champion), Carl Lewis (nine time Olympic champion sprinter), Edwin Moses (Olympic champion hurdles), Billie Jean King (39 Grand Slam titles in tennis), Joe Namath (professional footballer), Stan Price (world record bench press), Bill Pearl (four time Mr. Universe), Dave Scott (six time winner Ironman Triathlon), Charlene Wong Williams (Olympic champion figure skater), Jack La Lanne (world-famous fitness instructor and swimmer), Tony Gonzales (All-Pac 10 footballer), Mac Danzig (boxer, martial artist, athlete), Salim Stoudamire (NBA basketball player), etc.

**Actor vegetarians** – Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks, Forest Whitaker, Jackie Chan, John Cleese, Dustin Hoffman, Tobey Maguire, Willem Dafoe, Pierce Brosnan, Richard Gere, Alec Baldwin, Robert Redford, Danny De Vito, Christian Bale, etc.

**Actress vegetarians** – Jessica Biel, Natalie Portman, Anne Hathaway, Liv Tyler, Ashley Judd, Cameron Diaz, Gwyneth Paltrow, Pamela Anderson, Kim Basinger, Alicia Silverstone, Alyssa Milano, Jennifer Connelly, Reese Witherspoon, Daryl Hannah, Candice Bergen, Kate Winslet, Joanna Lumley, Brigitte Bardot, etc.

**Singer vegetarians** – Leona Lewis, Shania Twain, Carrie Underwood, Sade, Tracy Chapman, Vanessa Williams, Annie Lennox, Avril Lavigne, Justin Timberlake, Sir Paul McCartney and the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Tina Turner, etc.

The list above is not exhaustive. There are SO many famous vegetarians in the world – then and now.

*If anyone wants to save the planet, all they have to do is just stop eating meat. That's the single most important thing you could do. It's staggering when you think about it. Vegetarianism takes care of so many things in one shot: ecology, famine, cruelty. I am a vegetarian because I realise that even little chickens suffer pain and fear and experience a range of emotions.*

– Sir Paul McCartney

# 18 Take Your Pick

Ready to eat less meat? Here's what you can be...

**Vegans** – Vegans avoid ALL animal products. They don't eat eggs, dairy products or even honey. They also avoid using leather, fur and wool.

**Fruitarians** – Fruitarians eat only fruits, seeds, nuts and other plant components that can be gathered without harming the plant.

**Lacto-vegetarians** – They eat dairy products but not eggs.

**Lacto-ovo-vegetarians** – They eat both eggs and dairy products. They just avoid meat. These would be the most commonly found vegetarians.

**Pesce-vegetarians** – They are vegetarians who eat fish.

**Pollo-vegetarians** – They eat chicken and turkey but avoid beef and pork.

**Flexitarians** – They are vegetarians who occasionally eat some meat.

As stated earlier in this book, a survey conducted in the UK showed that an average meat-eater would consume

about 11,000 animals in his lifetime. So, when you choose to reduce your meat consumption, do give yourself a pat on the back. You're already making a difference to the animals and reducing the suffering of many animals in the factory farms and slaughterhouses.

# 19 A Daily Gentle Reminder

Why should I eat less meat?

**Reduce Meat to Reduce the Cruelty in Animal Farms –**

The killing will not stop until the eating stops. The killing can be reduced if the eating is reduced.

**Reduce Meat for Better Health –** Meat has saturated fat and cholesterol, factory-farmed meat is toxic and may contain Salmonella, E.coli and excessive adrenalin. Factory farming also contributes to bird flu, Japanese Encephalitis and mad cow disease. Meat-eating has been associated with a higher chance of heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, etc.

**Reduce Meat for Conservation of the Environment –**

Reduce our carbon footprint and save the forests, our land, the rivers and the very air that we breathe.

**Reduce Meat to Alleviate World Hunger –** Food for livestock cultivation can be channeled to alleviate world hunger if people eat less meat.

**Reduce Meat for World Peace –** It is sometimes said that world peace begins at the dinner table. Vegetarians are generally more gentle and peace-loving. That's food for thought!

*True benevolence, or compassion, extends itself through  
the whole of existence and sympathizes with the distress of  
every creature capable of sensation.*

*– Joseph Addison*

## Epilogue

In this little book, I have shared with you many reasons why we might like to consider reducing our meat consumption.

For me, personally, I only need one reason – compassion for the animals.

The suffering that goes on in factory farms is horrendous. We can make a difference in reducing the number of animals that need to be bred to be slaughtered even if we just go meatless once a week.

So, let us make a conscious, conscientious and well-informed choice towards more compassionate eating.

Remember that we ALWAYS have a choice.

*To my mind, the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body.*

– Mahatma Gandhi

## Bumper Sticker Quotes

*We don't need to eat anyone who would run, swim,  
or fly away if he could.*

– James Cromwell

*One may not eat what has a face.*

– Paul McCartney

*A vegetarian is a person who won't eat anything  
that can have children.*

– David Brenner

*How can you eat anything with eyes?*

– Will Kellogg

*We all love animals. Why do we call some “pets” and others “dinner?”*

– K.D. Lang

*Animals are my friends, and I don't eat my friends.*

– George Bernard Shaw

## Prayer of gentleness to all creatures

*To all the humble beasts there be,  
To all the birds on land and sea,  
Great Spirit, sweet protection give  
That free and happy they may live!*

*And to our hearts the rapture bring  
Of love for every living thing;  
Make us all one kin, and bless  
Our ways with Nature's gentleness!*

– John Galsworthy  
(1867 – 1933)

Nobel Prize winner (Literature) 1932

*I am sometimes asked “Why do you spend so much of your time  
and money talking about kindness to animals when there is so  
much cruelty to men?”*

*I answer: “I am working at the roots.”*

— George T. Angell



AnimalCare is a charity that promotes caregiving to stray animals and helps in their spay-neuter and medical needs.

### **Our Mission**

1. To encourage people to be caregivers to animals.
2. To help in the spaying-neutering and medical needs of stray animals.
3. To cultivate compassion to animals through education

### **How you can help and participate:**

- a. Be a caregiver to stray animals – feed the animals, get them spayed/neutered and continue looking after them in a responsible manner. If you require help in spaying/neutering, please contact us.
- b. Be a volunteer – help foster and rehome rescued animals, and contribute your expertise and skills so that we can work together to provide more help to the animals.
- c. Be our supporter – tell your friends about our work and encourage them to start a similar programme in their own communities. Educate children from young to be kind to animals. Donate to our fund.  
The stray animals need OUR help.

Let us work together to create a more harmonious and peaceful community for humans and animals.

For further information, please contact: [chankahycin@gmail.com](mailto:chankahycin@gmail.com)

Website: [www.myanimalcare.org](http://www.myanimalcare.org)

**LOVE US, NOT EAT US !**



**All Lives Are Precious**

*[www.loveusnoteatus.com](http://www.loveusnoteatus.com)*

Loveusnoteatus.com is a website single-handedly managed by TY Lee. TY sends his car decals and stickers all over the world, and his message has struck the hearts and minds of many, many people.

## Go Meatless Once a Week!



Have you often wanted to reduce your meat consumption? In this little booklet, Chan Kah Yein shares with you ways on how you may achieve this. She encourages the reader to move towards a diet of eating less meat, which is definitely more doable and acceptable than adopting a strict vegetarian diet.