

戒殺四十八問節選 (續)

An Excerpt from the Forty-Eight Inquiries of Non-Killing (continued)

清·周安士居士述 (白話)

鍾佰晟 英譯

By Upasaka Zhou An Shi of the Qing Dynasty

English Translated by Brian Chung



(接本刊641期)

問：殺生為業的人，養家活口，全賴這份工作。如果勸他改行的話，豈不是了他生路？愛畜生而不愛人，我實在不敢苟同。

答：以殺生為業，好比是吃有毒的肉乾以療飢餓。雖然從事殺生之業暫時得到衣食，但卻必須累劫受果報之苦，沒有停止之期。正是為了愛他的緣故，才勸他改業，怎麼反而說絕了他的生路呢。世間不以殺生為業的人，難道就會死了嗎，你實在是沒有仔細思量呀。

問：牛可以耕田，狗可以看門守夜，固

(Continued from Issue #641)

Question: There are many people who make a living by fishing or working in the meat packing industry. If we exhort them to change professions, we would be causing them financial ruin. Isn't it unreasonable to favor animals over humans?

Answer: Those who support themselves in such a manner are like a man who eats poisoned meat to satiate his hunger. Even though they may be able to live comfortably off the earnings for a while, they will have to undergo many kalpas of excruciating karmic retribution. The reason we urge hunters, fishermen, ranchers, butchers and so forth to change professions is because we are concerned about them. Thus, how can we be considered unreasonable? Aren't there plenty of people who support themselves very well without having to kill animals?

然應當憐念不殺牠們，不過豬羊一無所能，除了食牠們之外，沒別的使用途。

答：戒殺放生，是要成全我們的惻隱之心，豈是從此物之有用或無用上來論。如果因為此物有用而不食牠，這仍然是自私的念頭。實在是我們的自性被習氣給蒙蔽住了，所謂愛人愛物，不過是個貪心而已。

問：雞犬牛羊被殺的時候，都會哀鳴做怕死之狀，殺牠們確實不忍心。不過微細的水族類，殺牠們之時，既不出聲也不流淚，何必戒殺牠們呢？

答：禽獸與水族，形狀雖然有大小，但是本性是沒有大小不同的。譬如殺老人與殺嬰兒，罪是相同的。若認為牠們被殺時沒有哀鳴聲也不流淚，就以為牠們被殺時不會痛的話，請你仔細觀察一下啞巴被殺時的情形就知道了。

問：親自拿刀殺生，確實有損慈悲之心。不過若是別人殺了，而我才吃，又有何不可呢？

答：你這叫做掩耳盜鈴呀，若是認為別人殺的，就可以嫁禍於人。那麼委屈受到用刑之人，是否應當埋怨執刑之人，而不應當埋怨下令用刑之官長呢。唉，畜生可以欺騙，然而可以欺騙得了自己的良心嗎？

問：放生固然是善舉，但是所放生之物，又會被人捕捉，這可怎麼辦？

答：捕捉的人隨他捕捉，放生的人還是照放。譬如良醫治病，並不能保證被治者將來不會死。又譬如飢荒時免費煮粥供飢民食，並不能保

Question: Cows help plow the fields and dogs loyally guard our homes. Thus, they have utility and should not be killed. However, pigs and lambs have no other uses. If we do not eat them, what should we do with them?

Answer: One abstains from meat and liberates life in order to cultivate compassion. It has nothing to do with whether the animal is useful to humans or not. If one abstains from eating a type of meat simply because the animal has utility, then such thoughts are selfish. Such selfishness exists because evil habits and defilements still cover up our Buddha-nature.

Question: It is true that when animals such as chicken, sheep and cattle are about to be slaughtered, they will cry out and show fear? Thus, killing them would be cruel. However, no such distress is shown by small aquatic species. Therefore, why should we abstain from killing them?

Answer: Even though animals and aquatic species come in different sizes, their Buddha-nature is all the same. For instance, both the killing of old men and babies are considered murder. If you insist on thinking that certain animals feel no pain because they do not shed tears or scream, then imagine the reaction of a mute person being attacked. Would you hear screams?

Question: It is indeed cruel to personally slaughter animals. However, if we only eat the meat that others have slaughtered, wouldn't that make us blameless?

Answer: Such logic is nothing more than self-deception. If you think that you can escape blame by delegating the task of slaughtering to others, then shouldn't a wrongfully executed man blame only the executioner and not the magistrate? Plausible deniability can fool some, but you cannot fool your conscience.

Question: Liberating life is virtuous, but what should we do if the liberated animals are captured again?

Answer: Let hunters and fishermen do as they please. No one should cease doing good just because others do evil. For instance, a dedicated doctor cannot guarantee that the patient he heals today will live to see tomorrow. Likewise, those bringing relief in a famine

證飢民日後不會挨餓。世間萬事皆是如此，何以獨對放生有疑問。而且你又如何知道，所放生之物，都會再度被人捕捉，而沒有一個可以逃生的呢？

問：行善重要在心地上論，只要心善就好，何必戒殺呢？

答：你這是說的什麼話呀，你所謂的善心，是為了自己的口腹之娛，而使畜生受到彌天之苦。天下凶毒之心，沒有能超過這種心的了。請問，你的善心何在？孟子說：「人也者，仁也。」有仁慈之心，則不會殺生，殺生則非仁慈。天下斷無好殺生的仁人君子。

問：我是無可無不可，不一定非要戒殺，也不一定非不戒殺。反正我以無心來看待戒殺。

答：以無心之心來戒殺，不一定有功德。而雖然無心，卻殺了生，豈能無罪呢？譬如流寇盜賊，去搶劫別人的家，他的箭誤中了你，你能原諒他的無心嗎？

問：畜生被殺被烹煮，是牠們自己罪業難逃。縱然我不殺牠，也還是會有人殺牠呀，所以殺牠們有何損害？

答：畜生自己的罪業固然不可能逃脫，而我們自己的罪業，難道不能逃嗎？如果你以為畜生罪業該死不可逃，你因此而殺牠，那麼你就和牠一樣，同樣受不可逃之罪業了。彼此相食相殺，有它必然的因果道理。而人處於可以逃脫的處境，為何不想早早逃脫呢？

問：世間畜生的被殺，大多是前世欠債的緣故，殺牠們有什麼罪過？

答：畜生被殺以償宿世債業是沒錯，不過其中有該被我殺，有不該被我殺的分別。

cannot be sure if they could successfully avert starvation. The world is full of uncertainty, why do people only have doubts regarding life liberation? Moreover, how could you be sure that all the animals that are liberated will be recaptured?

Question: Virtue is simply a good heart. Thus, isn't it enough that we are good people? Why must we also abstain from meat?

Answer: Such a statement makes no sense whatsoever. How can you be virtuous if you inflict unspeakable pain on other living beings? There is no malice greater than the heart that tolerates slaughter. Mencius said, "Humanity is based on mercy and compassion." Thus, a virtuous man will not kill or slaughter. People who inflict torturous pain on animals cannot be truly benevolent. There is not one virtuous man or noble gentleman under Heaven that is partial to slaughter.

Question: I am indifferent to this matter. I neither intentionally slaughter nor deliberately avoid doing so. I simply go with the flow... is that wrong?

Answer: If you slaughter when it is convenient to do so and refrain at other times simply out of caprice or absent-minded indifference, you will not receive any merits. However, you will still incur karmic retribution for the living beings you do kill. For instance, if a bandit misfires a crossbow bolt while plundering someone's household, and if the stray bolt hits you, would you consider him guiltless?

Question: Animals are killed or boiled because of their past evil karma. Even if we refrain from slaughtering them, someone else surely will. Thus, what harm could possibly result from slaughtering?

Answer: Even though animals must undergo their own karmic retributions, we are in a different position — we can choose. If you slaughter and hunt because you feel that they deserve it, then you will sink to their level. You will be reborn as an animal to be slaughtered. Thus, as we currently possess human rebirth, we have the ability to change our karmic situation for the better through the way we act.

該被我殺的是，前世他曾殺我，現在彼此相逢，照理他該償命於我。不該被我殺是說，前世他殺了別人，現在雖然業報到了，但卻不該償命於我。世人一頓宴飲，所殺的畜生品類和數量無數。一塊肉就不曉得有多少的微細生命，難道牠們全都應該償命於吃的人嗎？我想牠們之中，大概只有一、二個是該償前世之債的。吃牠們的人，等於是先欠債於來世。

問：與自己沒有冤懟的，殺了牠固然應當會有報應。但是和自己有冤懟的，彼此一往一來，相殺之報就互不再欠。這麼說來，殺有冤懟的畜生，又有什麼關係呢？

答：你見過世人互相毆打的情形嗎？這邊用棍子打過去，那邊用棍子打過來。或者是彼此兩拳如下雨般不停的打下去。何曾見過兩人一來一往之後，各各都平心靜氣停手不打的呢。菩薩觀看未來的因緣，清楚得如同觀火般，所以即使遇到冤仇，也不回報。

問：佛說凡是有生命的，大多是宿世的父母及親人，有什麼證據這麼說呢？

答：六道眾生無量劫來一直輪迴不已，就以一劫來講，和我們有關的眾生數量就多得數不清。因此，就以你目前所見到的眾生，怎知就與你無關連呢。我親自見聞下面這件事。蓬溪令劉道源退休回老家，歸途中借住一位秦姓人家裡。晚上他夢見一位婦女哭著向他說，她本是這家主人的妻子，因為生前打死過一名婢女，因此地府的官吏判她死罪，罰她投胎為羊，現在正在羊欄裡，明天就要被殺來招待客人您了。劉道源趕緊告訴主人這件事，但已經來不及了，秦家人傷心不已。

Hence, why delay in escaping this vicious cycle by adopting virtue and humaneness?

Question: Animals are often killed because of the karmic debts they owe. Thus, why is it wrong for us to collect our due?

Answer: It is true that animals are killed as repayment for past karmic debts. However, there is a difference between simple karmic retribution and the retribution of maturing debt. The former is when an animal's past evil karmic seeds ripen in the form of random slaughter. The latter situation refers to when an animal is slaughtered by someone who had been killed by it in past lives.

In a typical banquet, the number of animals killed is countless. For instance, just one piece of meat contains myriad microbes. As people are so indiscriminate in their eating habits, how can anyone be certain that every piece of meat they eat is their rightful due? Most likely, only a few out of the multitudes of animals you eat actually owe you. The rest are now your karmic creditors! If we kill animals that do not owe us their lives, we will surely receive retribution.

Question: If we kill animals that actually do owe us their lives, doesn't that cancel out the debt? Surely, there can be no further retribution?

Answer: Have you never seen a feud? How many rivals instantly become best friends after bouts of savage fighting? Bodhisattvas can clearly see how today's causes and conditions will play out in the future. Thus, Bodhisattvas never engage in vengeance.

Question: The Buddha has said that anything that has life had once been our parents or relatives in previous rebirths. Is there any evidence for this?

Answer: Sentient beings have been turning in Samsara since time immemorial. Even if we take only one kalpa, the number of beings we would have been associated with during that time period would be countless. In fact, some of the animals currently in your household may be someone you knew in this life! For instance, I have personally witnessed the following case: When Liu Dao Yuan (the former magistrate of Pengxi County) was on his way home after retiring, he lodged at the home of the Qin family.

唉，世界上這類事情多得很，只是肉眼凡夫看不到而已，可悲呀。

咸豐三年，浙江紹興府有個姓黎的，無惡不作，結果活生生從人就變成了一頭豬，他的家人就把他送到雲棲寺的下院去放生，這是許蔭庭司馬親自見到的事。

問：見到有人殺生，或是有人捕魚捉鳥，雖然有心願救牠們，奈何力不從心呀。

答：見到有人殺生的時候，心裡要默念一切會的神咒，或是專念阿彌陀佛的名號。並代替被殺之物發懺悔心，那麼被殺之物，自然會得到利益。見到捕魚捉鳥的人，你就把心念專注在此人身上，心無雜念的默念南無多寶如來幾十聲，那麼那些魚鳥都可以逃脫被網捕的命運。此法非常靈驗，千萬不要輕忽。

問：求神的人，有為求生兒子，求延壽命，有為求功名或求發財。如果不殺牲口祭祀的話，如何能表明敬意而獲得所求呢？

答：天地間的神明，都是好生惡殺的。殺畜生讓畜生無兒子以求自己得兒子，減畜生的壽命來求延長自己的壽命，殺取畜生的生命而求取自己的功名利祿。這種行為不要說天理所不容，而自己又如何忍心這麼做呢。這麼做，不僅無益，而且有害。

問：平常持齋的人，祭祀當然可以用素的。如果平常吃肉的人，用素祭神，豈不是慢瀆神明了？

答：《易經》上說：「東鄰殺牛，不如西鄰之禴祭，實受其福。」（

That night, a tearful matron appeared in his dreams. She told him that she was the recently deceased wife of his host. Moreover, she revealed that King Yama had sentenced her to be reborn as a sheep for the offense of having beaten a servant girl to death. She also revealed that she was currently in the Qin family livestock pen and would be slaughtered the next day.

Liu Dao Yuan immediately rushed to inform his host of what he had just witnessed. However, it was already too late. The whole Qin family was grief stricken! Such situations happen often in this world, however, common people without spiritual attainments remain oblivious to such workings of karma.

Furthermore, in 1853, a native of Zhejiang, Mr. Li was known to have committed all kinds of evil. His evil karma eventually ripened and he turned into a pig while alive. His family members then sent him to live at a Buddhist temple. Magistrate (Sima) Xu Ying Ting personally witnessed this.

Question: What should we do if we find ourselves powerless to stop acts of fishing, trapping and slaughtering?

Answer: Anyone who finds themselves in such a situation should sincerely recite whatever mantra they are familiar with, or sincerely recite Namó Amitabha. They should repent the animals' sins on their behalf and dedicate the merits of the recitation to them. This way, the animals will naturally receive karmic benefits.

If you see someone fishing or trapping, then focus your attentions on that person. Do not entertain other thoughts. Single-mindedly recite Namó Many Jeweled Tathagata for a few dozen times. If you do so, the fish and animals will all be able to evade capture. This Buddha's name is very potent, so do not fail to do as instructed.

Question: When we ask the gods to bless us with children, wealth, offices and long life, how can we not offer sacrifices as a show of respect?

Answer: Every deity adores life and abhors slaughter. Furthermore, how can we expect long life and good fortune if we take away the lives of animals? How can we expect healthy children if we kill the offspring of animals? Not only does killing offend Heaven, it also betrays our conscience. We must remember that we are also made of flesh. There is no benefit in offering meat. In fact, doing so will bring only great harm.

東邊的人家特別殺牛來祭祀，不如西邊的人家，平時的日常祭拜來得有實際的福報。）《左傳》上說：「澗溪沼沚之毛，蘋蘩藇藻之菜，可薦于鬼神。」（山澗溪邊沼澤沚岸的植物，及蘋蘩藇藻的菜，都是可以供養鬼神的。）難道在天之靈的神明，會和人爭肉吃不成？

問：接受血食祭祀的神明，會墮落地獄，有這種事嗎？

答：能作神明，是由於宿世正直的緣故。在這些正直的神明之中，比較有慈悲心的，是不會接受血食祀祭的。嗔心比較重的神明，則必定接受血食祭祀。有慈悲心的神明，智慧勝過福報，所以神明業報期滿之後，不會墮落惡道。嗔心重的神明，福報勝過智慧，神明業報期滿之後，難免會墮落惡道。所以要知道，上天希望眾生皆能生存，不獨只希望人類不被殺而已，要仔細體會這點。

問：現在知道爲了祭祀神明而殺生是不可以的，那麼爲了奉養雙親而殺生，不知道是否有罪過？

答：罪過更大。《禮記》上說：「善則歸親，過則歸己，人子之道也。」（好的都要給雙親，壞的都要給自己，這是為人子女的規矩。）我們自己不殺生，卻單爲了奉養雙親而殺生，這是把罪過都給雙親了，於心何忍呢。如果不得已的話，就用三淨肉（不親見畜生被殺，不聽聞畜生被殺時之哀號，不特別為自己殺）或畜生自然死亡之肉，來奉養雙親，或者是兩全之法。✿

Question: There is no question that those who are vegetarians should make vegetarian offerings to deities and their ancestors. However, if those who normally eat meat were to make vegetarian offerings, wouldn't that be cheap and disrespectful?

Answer: *The I Ching (Book of Changes)* states: “A family that sacrifices a cow to honor their ancestors derive inferior merit compared to the family that regularly makes modest offerings.” Moreover, the Zuo Zhuan states: “Even the wild plants next to the mountain streams or the algae can be offered to gods and spirits.” Thus, do you think the gods and spirits who dwell in the skies will quibble over a few pieces of meat?

Question: Will gods and deities who accept meat offerings be reborn in the evil realms?

Answer: Sentient beings are reborn as gods and deities because they have cultivated virtue in their past life. Even though they are all virtuous, some are more merciful than others. The more merciful gods will reject offerings of meat. However, the gods that still have habits of anger will accept meat offerings. The merciful gods have more wisdom than blessings; the angry gods have more blessings than wisdom. Therefore, once the heavenly blessings of the merciful gods end, they will not be reborn in the evil realms. However, the gods that are given to anger will most likely be reborn in the lower realms. Everyone must understand that Heaven cherishes all living beings, not just human life.

Question: It is wrong to slaughter animals for the purpose of making meat offerings to gods and deities. However, is it also wrong to slaughter animals to feed one's parents?

Answer: It is even worse! *The Book of Rites* clearly states that: “Filial sons and daughters offer all that which is good to their parents and retain only the inferior for themselves.” Therefore, if we slaughter animals for the sake of offering meat to our parents, we would be saddling them with undesirable karmic offenses. How could we do something so unfilial? If we must provide our parents with meat, we should offer only the three types of clean meat: meat that comes from an animal that one has not personally witnessed (heard or seen) being killed, meat that did not come from an animal that one personally ordered to be slaughtered. Meat from an animal that died naturally is permitted as well. These are the only exceptions. ✿