



HE Kyabje Lati Rinpoche on vegetarianism

Q: In recent years, we heard that there are plans to convert the diet of the three great Gelugpa monasteries into full vegetarianism. What is Rinpoche's view of this plan and for that matter, for Buddhist monasteries in general, to become full vegetarian?

Rinpoche: I am happy the monastic authorities want to make this huge change. That is really appreciable. I really support this type of change coming up.

Q: Why does Rinpoche feel that it is better to be vegetarian?

Rinpoche: If the number of people who consume meat is reduced, it then automatically reduces the number of people who kill the animals to meet the demand. In this way, by becoming vegetarian, we contribute, to some extent, the reduction in the number of animals killed.

Q: Why is it then in old Tibet that the monasteries are rarely fully vegetarian?

Rinpoche: In Tibet, there are many people who are strict vegetarian. Even in the big monasteries where there are huge gatherings of monks, they never eat non-vegetarian food. In the monk's individual quarters, though, there might be some monks who eat meat as food. Vegetarianism is something not very new in Tibetan society. Generally, in the old Tibetan society, most of the people try to avoid taking meat specifically killed to feed individual person. This is evident in very level of Tibetan society. Even in the scriptures of the Buddha, we have to avoid taking such meat which is killed specially just to feed ourselves. The texts prohibit us from taking this type of meat. That is the common way of practice and instructions in the Buddha's teachings. Especially in the Mahayana teachings when a person does intensive practice of Bodhicitta, they are advised or prescribed to avoid taking meat.



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