

## Protect the future of the Earth, Protect life

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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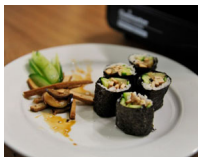
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*Being a vegetarian can cultivate endurance, calmness, and wisdom.  
It leads the mind toward the wholesome thought of returning to Nature.  
In turn, it saves the Earth, and save the human race.*

In recent years, global warming has caused notable climate changes and led to frequent strikes of natural disasters due to extreme weather conditions. It has been my long wish that everyone would have a heart of loving-kindness and compassion, and would not bear the idea of consuming animal meat. Many lines of evidence have shown that adopting a vegetarian diet would have a significant impact in protecting the earth environment and ecosystems. If we eliminate a meat-based diet, there will be no killings and no need to raise large numbers of farm animals, which contributes to polluting the land, ocean, and atmosphere.

It is reported that European governments and scientists conduct long term study on climate change and remedies for environmental degradation. Among the data in their studies, there are compelling reasons for humans to move toward a plant-based diet. Do you know how much land and forest are destructed, how much natural resources are wasted and depleted in raising livestock for food? Using grains as food for raising farm animals to feed humans is a very inefficient and wasteful process, not to mention the animal suffering.



According to scientific analyses, growing a kilogram of wheat uses about one thousand liters of water; on the other hand, producing a kilogram of beef uses more than fifteen thousand liters of water. This water usage contributes to the severe problem of fresh water depletion on Earth. The United Nation reports that farm livestock are the major source of greenhouse gas (methane, carbon dioxide, and nitrous oxide) emission – more than what is produced by all the cars on Earth! These are few examples demonstrating how the meat-based diet wastes natural resources and pollute the environment. In addition, in many countries, cattle are used as labors in farming activities; when the animals grow old and weak, they are slaughtered and served as food. From the humane point of view, this is a cruel practice.

Vegetarian diet has gain worldwide attention. There is the “World Vegetarian Day”, which designates October as the vegetarian awareness month. Many countries encourage citizens to have a meatless diet one day a week. According to Buddhism, abiding to a vegetarian diet is to respect life, to treat all sentient beings as equal, and to cultivate compassion and loving kindness toward all beings. If we can restrain our desire from food made from animal sources, it will not only benefit our health; it also helps the ecological environment.

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