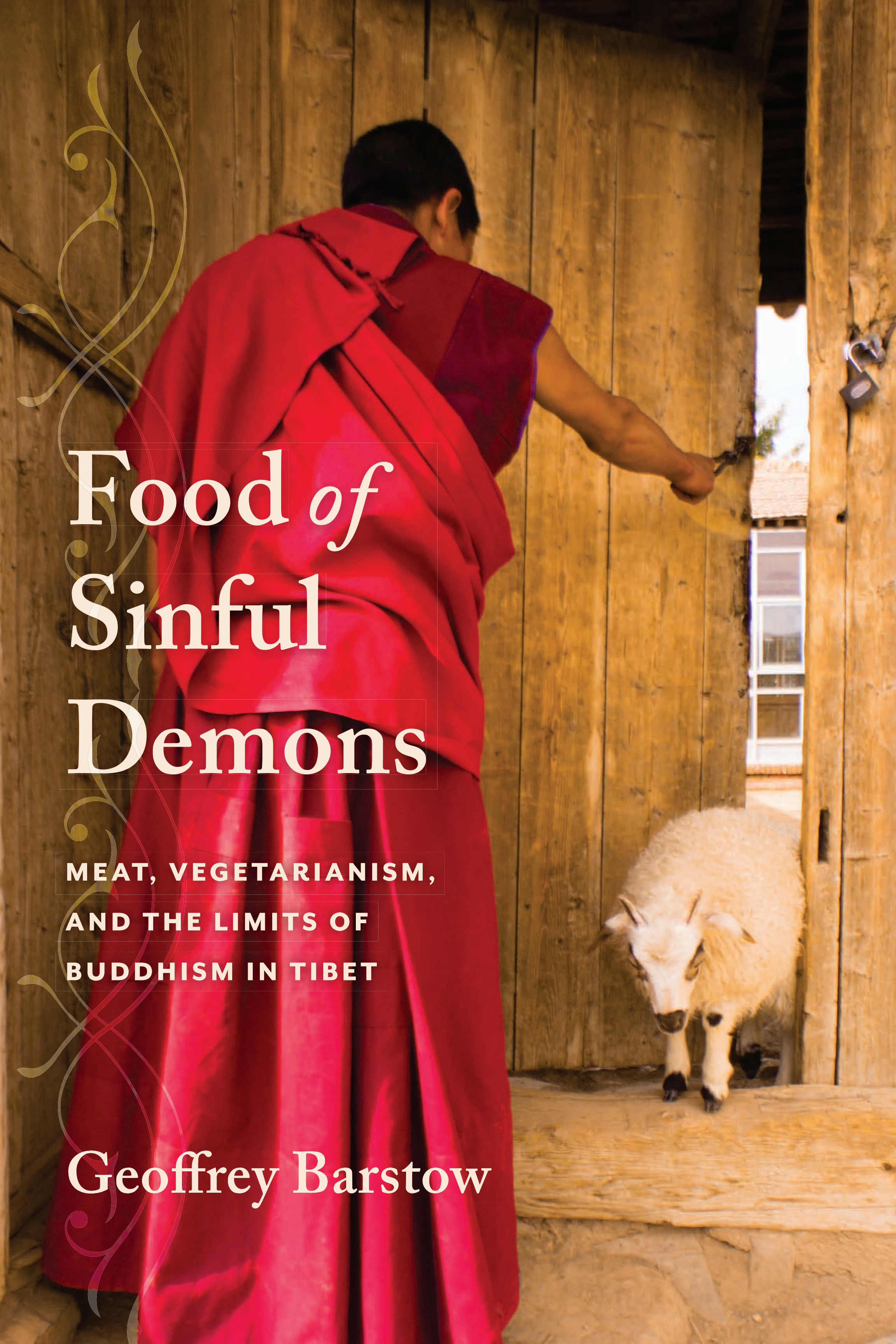

Food *of* Sinful Demons

MEAT, VEGETARIANISM, AND THE LIMITS OF BUDDHISM IN TIBET

Geoffrey Barstow

Food of Sinful Demons

STUDIES OF THE WEATHERHEAD EAST ASIAN INSTITUTE
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Meat, Vegetarianism, and the Limits of Buddhism in Tibet

GEOFFREY BARSTOW

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For Meg

Meat is a food of sinful demons.

—NYAMÉ SHERAB GYELTSEN

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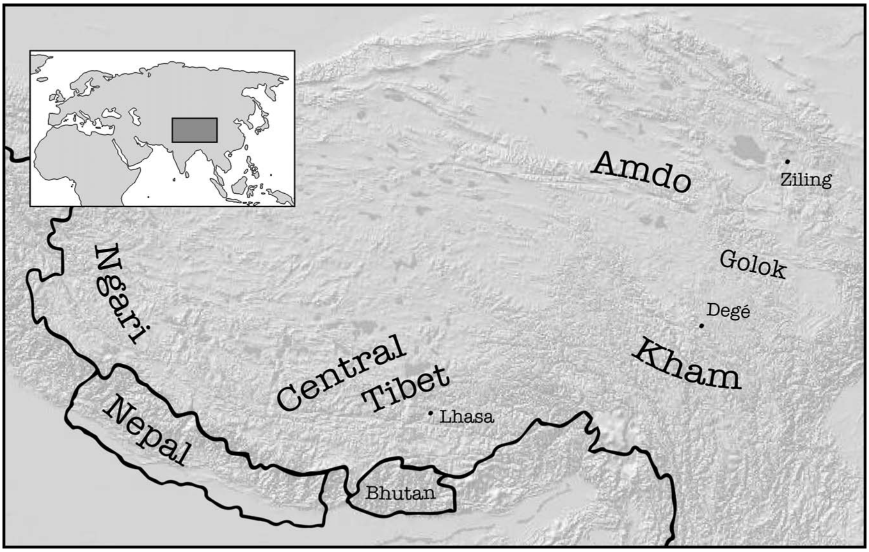
Note on Transliteration and Translation

For decades, there was no commonly accepted system for rendering Tibetan terms in Roman letters in a way that was easily pronounceable for the average reader. The system developed by Turrell Wylie accurately reproduced the Tibetan letters themselves, but because Tibetan includes so many silent letters, it was all but incomprehensible to those who do not read Tibetan (to give a particularly egregious example, the word spelled *bsgrubs* in Wylie transliteration is actually pronounced more like *drub*). Fortunately, over the last few years scholars have been rapidly adopting a system of phonetic transliteration developed by the Tibetan and Himalayan Library (THL). The THL system sets aside accurate reproduction of Tibetan spelling in favor of consistently reproducing the pronunciation of these words in modern spoken Tibetan. Throughout this book, I have largely followed THL's guidelines to render Tibetan names and terms. That said, I have departed from the THL system on several occasions. Sometimes this was simply because I felt the THL system did not accurately render Tibetan pronunciation. More frequently, I modified THL spelling because a name or place is already well known with a particular spelling. Thus, I use Jigmé Lingpa, rather than Jikmé Lingpa, as this eighteenth-century master is already well known and his name is usually spelled with a *g* instead of a *k*. Those who are deeply familiar with the THL system may find this disconcerting at times, but my hope is that using well-established spellings in this way will help less-specialized readers find other information on these individuals. For those who read

Tibetan, precise spellings for all terms, personal names, and place names can be found in a table that follows the main body of this book. In this table and in the notes, I use the Wylie system to accurately render Tibetan spelling.

This book contains many short translations from Tibetan texts. In almost all cases, the translations provided here are my own, even those for which published English translations already exist. The fact that I use my own translations should not be taken as a suggestion that these previous translations are inadequate. Instead, I simply hope to keep the style and terminology consistent across this work. At the same time, whenever a previous English translation is known to me, I have included a reference (with page numbers) in the note, so that readers may easily find these other renditions and compare them with my own. In the few cases where I did not personally translate a passage, I state this fact in the note.

Map of Tibet


Amdo
Ziling
Golok
Degé
Ngari
Kham
Central Tibet
Lhasa
Nepal
Bhutan

Map of the Tibetan cultural sphere. International borders correspond to contemporary national boundaries. Internal divisions are approximate, and do not correspond to contemporary political divisions. Drawn by the author.

Food of Sinful Demons

Introduction

ON JUNE 13, 2003, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö addressed an assembly of monks, nuns, and laity gathered at Larung Gar, near the town of Serta in eastern Tibet. The occasion was Saga Dawa, the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death, and Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö implored his listeners to mark the event by becoming vegetarian.[1] This was not an easy request. Meat has long been one of the most important staples in the Tibetan diet; for many, a meal without meat is not a full meal. But Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö is among the most respected lamas[2] currently active in Tibet, and his request helped spark one of the most interesting facets of Buddhist practice in contemporary Tibet: the rise of widespread vegetarianism. While the scope of the contemporary vegetarian movement is unprecedented, however, the practice itself is not. Despite the importance of meat in the Tibetan diet, many Tibetans over the last thousand years have made the difficult decision to give it up. When Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö and his peers denounce meat, they are drawing on a well-established tradition of vegetarianism, complete with nuanced theoretical arguments and an awareness of the practical difficulties such a diet entails.

That tradition is the subject of this book. In the pages that follow, I paint a picture of vegetarianism as practiced in Tibet prior to the arrival of communist forces in the 1950s. Over the course of nearly a thousand years, numerous Tibetan religious leaders debated vegetarianism, employing a variety of arguments to critique the consumption of meat. Those arguments, however, did not exist in a cultural vacuum. At the same time that these figures were exhorting their followers to adopt vegetarianism, powerful social and economic forces mitigated their impact. The result was the consistent presence of a small number of vegetarians among the devout, but only limited adoption of such a diet by other elements of Tibetan society.

Broadly speaking, this book has two main goals. The first is simply to demonstrate that vegetarianism not only existed in Tibet but also was an important aspect of Tibetan religion since at least the tenth century. That may seem like a simple point, but vegetarianism has been largely—indeed, almost entirely—overlooked by the scholarship on Tibetan religion, both in the Western academy and among many contemporary Tibetan scholars. While vegetarianism never became normative, it was a consistent presence, supported by lamas of every geographical region and sectarian affiliation. The very fact that debates over meat eating could persist for a thousand years without resolution suggests that the importance of vegetarianism in Tibetan religiosity outweighs its limited number of adherents.

This book's second—and more complex—goal is to situate the practice of vegetarianism in its broader religious and cultural context. As I show, despite the varied perspectives individual authors have brought to the debate, the overall perspective taken by Tibetan religious leaders is remarkably consistent: eating meat is, at best, morally problematic and, at worst, completely incompatible with a religious lifestyle. Yet actually adopting a vegetarian diet was relatively rare. It did happen, but only among a minority of dedicated practitioners. In order to account for the persistence of meat in the Tibetan diet, despite the broad consensus that it is morally problematic, I look beyond the bounds of religious discussion and debate, highlighting elements of Tibetan culture that restricted the adoption of vegetarianism. First among these is a conviction, found both in the formal Tibetan medical tradition and in popular understanding, that meat is necessary for human health. Without meat, it was widely believed, the body would become weak and feeble. For many Tibetans, therefore, the Buddhist stance against meat was counterbalanced by practical concerns over health and physical strength. For them, meat was a necessary evil, morally problematic but necessary nevertheless.

Importantly, this view of meat continues to adhere to Buddhist ethical norms. Despite how it has sometimes been portrayed, however, Tibet was never a land united in the pursuit of religion. Multiple perspectives and ideals—secular, religious, or some nebulous combination of the two—were in play and often in tension. In some of these alternative, nonreligious perspectives, meat was viewed in largely positive terms. Meat eating, for instance, was an important demonstration of wealth, and those whose personal identities revolved around cultivating economic prosperity found it difficult to give up. Perhaps more importantly, meat was intimately connected to heroic masculine ideals. Those who prioritized this aspect of Tibetan culture valorized such virtues as strength, horsemanship, and fighting skill. For them, meat was both a necessary support for physical strength and a display of domination over animals, a public proof of their masculinity. In both of these perspectives, meat was a positive good rather than a necessary evil, an important part of a well-lived life.

In the end, I argue that questions over meat eating existed at the center of a complex tension, with religious perspectives largely supporting vegetarianism, while practical concerns with health and nonreligious ideals pulled in the other direction. Individual religious leaders tried to navigate this tension using a variety of creative rhetorical and practical strategies. For some, this meant restrictions on the types of meat that could be eaten, such as allowing only the meat of animals that had died naturally. For others, it resulted in prayers or other practices that could be performed to alleviate some of the negativity associated with meat. Others advocated vegetarianism only during certain contexts, such as during a religious retreat or holy festival (Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö's decision to speak on vegetarianism during Saga Dawa was not coincidental). By advocating options that restricted meat but did not reject it entirely, these religious leaders tried to split the difference, critiquing the consumption of meat while also acknowledging the difficulties of maintaining a fully vegetarian diet in Tibetan society.

What Is Vegetarianism?

Before delving into the history of vegetarianism in Tibet, I should take a moment to define what, exactly, I mean when I speak of "vegetarianism." In the modern English-speaking world, the term vegetarianism can encompass practices as diverse as fruitarianism (only fruits and nuts that can be harvested without harming the plant), veganism (the strict rejection of all products derived from animals), and pescetarianism (in which red meat and chicken are rejected, but fish is permitted). Tibetan culture also includes a wide variety of dietary practices that can all be included, if sometimes tenuously, within the category of vegetarianism.

At the outset, it is important to note that this study is concerned with the place of vegetarianism in Tibetan *religion*. Buddhism, Bön, or other traditions may provide this religious perspective, but fundamentally I am looking at Tibetan religiosity. I consider nonreligious interpretations of meat eating (especially in chapters 5 and 6), but always in the context of how these perspectives impact the practice of Tibetan religion. Therefore, this study excludes forms of vegetarianism motivated by nonreligious beliefs or practices, such as concerns about the environment, meat's negative health effects, or even fashion.

In most ways this is a moot point, as I have encountered no references to nonreligious vegetarianism in the sources I have studied. Environmental concerns may motivate some contemporary Tibetans to adopt vegetarianism, and others may do so out of a sense that vegetarianism is progressive, fashionable, or modern.[3] This book, however, is concerned primarily with vegetarianism as practiced in Tibet prior to the 1950s, and these concerns are nowhere to be found in relevant sources. Instead, all the sources I have found discuss vegetarianism within a religious context.

I say this is a moot point in *most* ways because there is one important exception: poverty. As discussed extensively in chapter 5, meat has long been more expensive than other foods. In fact, meat has often been seen as a luxury item, to the point where some Tibetans consider the excessive consumption of meat to be an unseemly display of wealth. In such a context, there must have been many people simply unable to afford meat, but who would have eaten it if they could. Strictly speaking, such a diet could be considered vegetarianism. This study, however, is fundamentally an analysis of people who give up meat intentionally. As such, although an analysis of such vegetarianism-through-poverty would be interesting (perhaps casting light on questions of class and wealth), it is beyond the scope of this book.

Limiting the scope of this project to religiously motivated vegetarianism, however, does little to characterize what that vegetarianism looked like. In order to do so, it seems appropriate to turn first to the sources themselves. Throughout much of the Tibetan literature on vegetarianism, a distinction is drawn between food that is *karsé*, literally meaning "white food," and *marsé*, "red food."

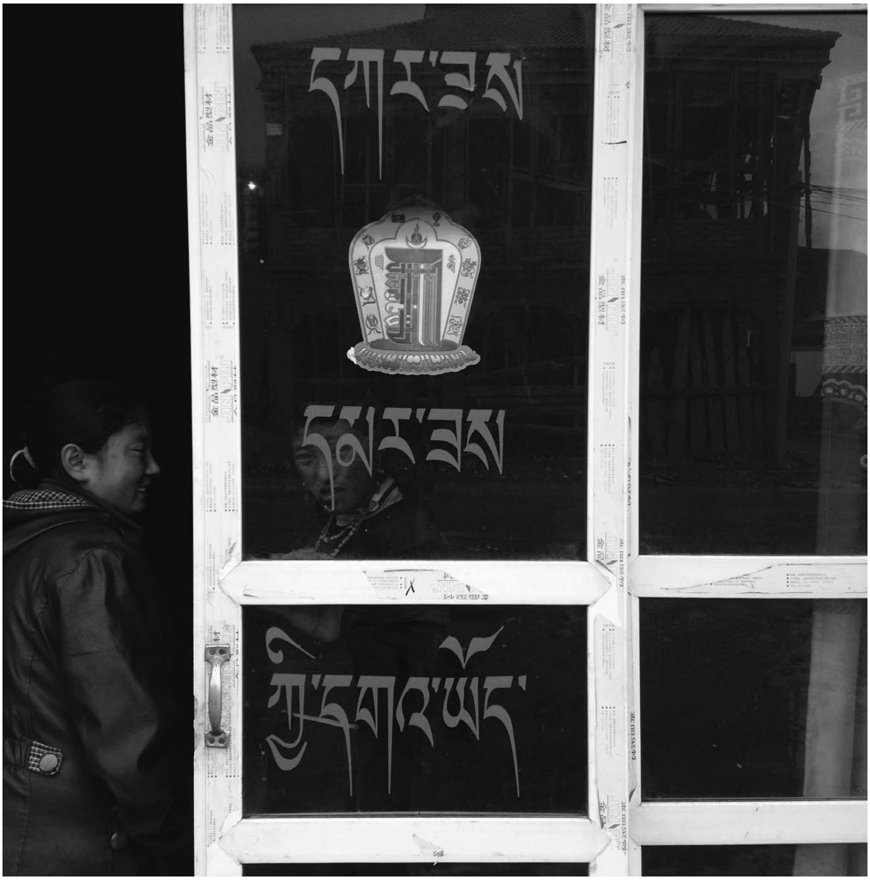


FIGURE 0.1 Tibetan restaurant in Manigego advertising both *karsé* and *marsé* foods. Photo by the author.

As this color-coding suggests, *karsé* food is uncontaminated by blood, free from killing. In many ways, this is the fundamental distinction in discussions of vegetarianism. On the one hand you have food that is derived from killing—including all forms of flesh, whether derived from mammals, birds, or fish. On the other you have food that is free from such stains.

The term *karsé*, however, refers only to the food itself, not to any ongoing dietary choice. Thus, an individual who generally eats meat can order *karsé* food for any given meal just because they like the taste. It would be quite a stretch to think of such a person as a vegetarian. Tibetan literature, in fact, lacks a consistent term for someone who adopts such a diet, the equivalent of the English term "vegetarian." In modern oral usage, both the term *karsépa*, "one who [eats] white food," and *sha masa ken*, "one who does not eat meat," are used in this way. In older textual material, however, these terms are rarely, if ever, attested.

One term that is used in some older texts is *dokar*. This term incorporates the term *kar*, or "white," suggesting a kinship with the term *karsé*. If the syllable *kar* in *dokar* clearly refers to "white," however, the *do* is less straightforward. For one thing, the relevant texts do not agree on a standard spelling for *do*, most often using *rdor*, but sometimes using *sdor*. The *Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary* defines *rdor* as "to grind, or sharpen," a definition seemingly unrelated to vegetarianism.[4] The same dictionary, on the other hand, defines *sdor* as a spice or condiment, such as one might use to flavor soup.[5] Drawing on this latter spelling and definition, Hou Haoran has suggested that *dokar* should be defined as "white condiment," an etymology that is as good as any I have come up with.[6] If the precise spelling and etymology of this term are unclear, in actual use the term consistently refers to individuals who have intentionally given up meat for a sustained period of time, usually their entire lives. It is often paired with the term *denchik*, or "single seat," referring to the practice of eating only once a day, during a single sitting. Together, *denchik dokar* suggests a rigorously ethical and ascetic diet.

Even the term *dokar*, however, is not common in Tibetan literature. Most frequently, it is found in texts relating to the Drigung branch of the Kagyü school and the Ngorpa sect of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism.[7] As discussed later, both of these traditions had long and well-established traditions of vegetarianism. In these lineages, saying that someone practices *dokar* is a reasonably common way to refer to vegetarianism. Outside of texts belonging to these traditions, however, the term *dokar* is only rarely used.

Instead, the idea that an individual maintains a consistent vegetarian diet is usually indicated through description. One example (among many) of such descriptive phrasing can be found in Ngawang Lekpa's biography, *Life of Ngawang Lekpa,* composed in the mid-twentieth century: "Since the time he requested monk's vows, he abandoned eating meat, drinking alcohol and eating after noon."[8] This passage does not use a term—such as *dokar*—to name Ngawang Lekpa's diet. Instead, it emphasizes his rejection of certain foods and practices. Describing vegetarianism in this way, rather than naming it, is done remarkably consistently across Tibetan literature. In addition to

Ngawang Lekpa's mid-twentieth-century biography, similar formulations are also found in many other texts, going back at least as far as *The Great Kagyü Biographies* of 1245.[9] Thus, despite the presence of terms such as *dokar*, on the whole Tibetan literature conceptualizes vegetarianism as a negative (the rejection of meat) rather than a positive (the adoption of a specific diet).

In this book I follow suit, defining vegetarianism not as a particular diet but as any practice that involves the intentional rejection of meat in one way or another. This is an admittedly broad definition, but that breadth reflects the actual practice of vegetarianism in Tibet. As discussed momentarily, Tibetan religion includes a remarkably diverse constellation of practices that reject meat on religious grounds, even if that abstention lasts only a day. By defining vegetarianism in this way, I hope to include all (or almost all) of those practices. Importantly, this definition highlights the actual rejection of meat; it is not enough to simply wish to eat less meat, or to think eating meat is wrong. One has to actually give it up, at least for a time.

Variations on a Theme

Conceptualizing vegetarianism in this way allows a certain flexibility, uniting under a single umbrella a range of practices that all reject meat but that differ in terms of their scope and duration. The first of these, and perhaps the most similar to the English term "vegetarianism," is the complete rejection of all forms of meat, at all times. Such a diet was by no means uncommon in Tibet. We have just seen Ngawang Lekpa reject all meat following his ordination. Many others did likewise. Indeed, for most of the Tibetan authors I have consulted, full vegetarianism served as something of a baseline. That is, when they mention rejecting meat, unless they specify something else, they are usually referring to full vegetarianism. Once again, I follow suit. Despite formally defining vegetarianism as any intentional rejection of meat, when I speak about vegetarianism in this book, I am usually speaking about full vegetarianism. When appropriate, of course, I discuss other forms of vegetarianism, and I make that clear in the text. Full vegetarianism, however, understood as the complete rejection of flesh on an ongoing basis, serves as a baseline, a standard practice against which others can be measured.

That said, it is clear that not all Tibetans who expressed concern over meat felt that full vegetarianism was a viable option. Instead, these individuals adopted some form of partial vegetarianism that reduced, but did not eliminate, meat. Many of these diets are discussed in detail later in this book (particularly in chapter 7), but it is worth mentioning them now in order to illustrate the breadth of options available to those who were sympathetic to vegetarianism but who felt, for one reason or another, that they were not able to adopt full vegetarianism.

One obvious variant on a fully vegetarian diet is simply to reduce the amount of meat in an individual's diet. Several contemporary Tibetan religious leaders have advocated this position, including the current Dalai Lama and Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje.[10] Inside Tibet, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö and many others have also suggested that if individuals feel unable to fully reject meat, they should at least reduce the amount they eat.[11] There are fewer references to such a diet in pre-communist literature, but it is clear that at least a few Tibetans from previous generations did adopt a partially vegetarian diet along these lines.[12]

Similarly, some individuals refused to eat meat on specific dates, usually holy days such as Saga Dawa. This holiday is nominally observed on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month but is often expanded into a month of festivities. As with other special dates, the karma that is accumulated during this time—either good or bad—is believed to be magnified. Thus, a bad deed will accrue worse karma during Saga Dawa than during other times, while a good deed will bring more positive karma. Because of the karmic potency of this event, many contemporary Tibetans refuse to eat meat during this holiday, and textual records also suggest that similar practices were popular at other times as well. Other individuals decided to adopt vegetarianism only during periods of intense religious practice, such as meditation retreats or *nyüngné* fasting rituals (discussed in chapter 4). As with auspicious days like Saga Dawa, the effects of religious practice are more profound during retreats or rituals, and many Tibetans seem to have felt that these were bad times to consume meat.

Another, more widely attested, variation on partial vegetarianism was to limit one's intake of meat to that which had been procured through ethically sound means, usually meaning meat that had "threefold purity." Threefold purity is discussed in detail in chapter 2 of this book, but for now I will summarize it as meat that the consumer has no reason to believe was killed specifically for them. (The "three" in threefold purity refers to having *seen* the animal killed for you, *heard* that it was killed for you, or *suspecting* that it was killed for you.) Meat with threefold purity, many Tibetans have argued, can be eaten because the consumer bears no responsibility for the act of killing. Even those who disagreed with this notion, however, often found meat with threefold purity to be superior to normal meat. Thus, Shabkar Tsokdrük Rangdröl, himself a strict vegetarian, advised students, "If you are not able to give it up, eat meat that has threefold purity, free of having been seen, heard or suspected."[13] Elsewhere, Shabkar is clear that threefold purity should not be used as an excuse to avoid vegetarianism. But for those who feel unable to adopt full vegetarianism, it is better than nothing at all.

Perhaps the clearest example of meat with threefold purity is the flesh of animals that have died of natural causes. In contemporary Tibet, I have found whole villages that claim to rely only on meat that comes from animals killed by lightning strikes, wolves, or accidents.[14] In prior generations, numerous individuals claim to have adhered to such a diet and encouraged it among their disciples.[15] It is, of course, impossible to know how closely these lamas inquired as to the origins of any meat they were served. Indeed, part of the appeal of the rule of threefold purity was that it freed the consumer from any need to inquire too closely: the meat is fine as long as they don't already think it was killed for them. Still, if adhered to, relying on meat only from animals that had died naturally would require the rejection of at least some meat, bringing it within the category of vegetarianism.

Practices such as these, where meat is given up only on a specific date, or only for a period of retreat that might last only a few days, carry no implication that a meatless diet will be followed later on. As such, these practices fall short of full vegetarianism. Still, as practices that involve intentionally giving up meat for religious reasons, it is important to include them in this study. Tibetan religion includes many variants on a vegetarian diet, and, in search of a comprehensive understanding, I have tried to include as many as possible. Thus, my definition of vegetarianism is intentionally broad, encompassing the entire constellation of religious practices that relate to the rejection of meat.

Meat, Alcohol, Garlic, Onions, and Tobacco

This study is focused on debates over meat eating and vegetarianism. Often, this debate was conducted entirely on its own terms. Sometimes, however, meat was discussed alongside such other items as alcohol, garlic, onions, and tobacco. All of these substances are, in one way or another, problematic for devout Buddhists. At the same time, the logic behind each is quite distinct, making their association with each other curious. Frequently, it seems, the only connection between these various substances is that they are all consumable and perceived to be negative in one way or another.

Alcohol is a great example of this. It is far and away the substance most commonly paired with meat. It is not at all unusual to read in a biography that someone gave up alcohol at the same time they abandoned meat. There are also several texts dedicated solely to critiquing both meat and alcohol. Clearly, the authors of these texts perceived a strong connection between these substances. At the same time, however, the actual faults attributed to meat and alcohol are quite distinct. Over the next few chapters, I show that, in one way or another, most discussions of meat return to the fact that eating meat entails harming animals. Alcohol, on the other hand, does not directly harm others. Instead, it is a problem because it diminishes one's mental stability, awareness, and inhibitions. As Jigmé Lingpa puts it, "Alcohol instantly turns you into a madman, so always avoid it."[16] In such a state, of course, one may do things one would otherwise avoid, and Tibetan texts frequently worry that drinking will lead to other forms of misconduct.[17] This is a secondary issue, however, distinct from the direct harm that eating meat entails.

Further, alcohol is unambiguously forbidden by the Vinaya, the monastic code containing the rules monks are expected to live by. As I show in the next chapter, the prohibition of meat is not nearly so unambiguous. Most interpreters of the Vinaya, in fact, argue that it explicitly allows monks and nuns to eat meat, at least under particular circumstances. Both of the primary arguments used to critique alcohol (that it makes you lose control and that it is explicitly forbidden) are, therefore, distinct from the primary argument against meat (that it harms animals).

Like alcohol, garlic and onions are sometimes held to harm the consumer, in this case by throwing the body's subtle energies off balance. Also like alcohol, the Vinaya expressly forbids garlic and onions. Their chief fault, however, seems to be their repulsive smell, and its effect on those around you, both human and nonhuman. Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen notes, for instance, that the smell of someone who eats garlic or onions will drive away the positive spirits and deities, leaving the area spiritually barren.[18] While eating meat is sometimes also said to drive away good spirits, this is not because of its odor, but because of what it says about the consumer's morality. Again, therefore, the arguments are quite distinct from those used to critique meat.

Distress over tobacco only begins to appear in Tibetan texts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Daniel Berounský has demonstrated, the concerns found in these texts are twofold: there is a fear that the smoke will damage the relationship between humans and the spirit world, and a concern that smoke will interfere with the body's subtle energies.[19] In many ways, then, concern over tobacco is analogous to concerns with garlic and onions. It is not, however, analogous to the issues with meat.

The distinctive nature of these arguments, in fact, leads me to question just how connected they actually are. This suspicion is bolstered by a close look at the texts themselves. While discussions of these substances are often found in the same text, they are usually treated in parallel, rather than at the same time. A good example of this is Dolpopa's *Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol*, which only turns to debates over meat after it has concluded its discussion of alcohol.[20] Both meat and alcohol are included in the same text, but the actual discussion of one is entirely distinct from the other. Similar patterns can be found in many other works as well.

In the end, these various substances seem to be united simply as consumables that are understood to be sinful in one way or another. Beyond this shared identity, however, they encompass distinct issues and debates. Therefore, given this book's focus on issues surrounding meat, I have largely avoided discussions of these other substances. Alcohol and the rest appear occasionally in the pages that follow, but never as a sustained object of analysis. While this decision was necessary in order to keep this work to manageable proportions, I remain hopeful that future researchers will shed light on the precise contours of the relationships among meat, alcohol, and other sinful consumables.

Looking Beyond Tibet

This book is focused on the practice of vegetarianism in Tibet and is squarely grounded in the broad fields of Tibetan and Buddhist studies, as well as several subdisciplines, particularly those surrounding the place of food, animals, and gender in Tibetan or Buddhist contexts. At the same time, however, this work also intersects with several other discussions currently active in and beyond academia. I discuss some of these explicitly at various points in this book, but others remain implicit. Over the next few pages I take those implicit issues and briefly make them explicit, pointing to a few of the questions and debates that intersect with the issues raised in this book. By doing so I do not claim that this book will reshape these discussions in particular ways. Instead, I merely wish to suggest areas of inquiry that can be placed profitably in dialogue with the work I have done here, with the hope that future scholars will be able to elaborate on these connections.

The first and perhaps most obvious of these discussions addresses the place of animals in religion, with "religion" here understood as a category of analysis. The study of animals and religion is still quite new as far as academic disciplines go, but is developing quickly. This field is too broad for me to survey fully, but a few recent works bear particular mention. Among these is Katherine Wills Perlo's *Kinship and Killing: The Animal in World Religions*, published in 2009. Perlo's goal in this work is to survey the place of animals in various world religions, and her core argument is that religious traditions around the world are pulled between a moral ideal that promotes animal welfare and the perceived need to justify and defend eating meat and other exploitative uses of animals. More specifically, Perlo argues that "conflicting feelings about human-animal relations have produced strategies of resolution, which have contributed to religious and philosophical beliefs."[21] Perlo goes on to identify three such strategies of resolution, which she terms aggression, evasion, and defense. Unfortunately, Perlo is hampered by her attempt to identify strategies that cut across all world religions. In her attempt for breadth, she can sometimes miss important aspects of individual traditions (particularly non-Western traditions such as Buddhism).[22] This critique aside, however, Perlo's broader point is well taken. In some ways, in fact, while this present book was not conceived or written as a response to Perlo's work, the emphasis that I place on the tension between Buddhistic ethics and Tibetan cultural norms can be read as sympathetic to the basic tension between religious ideals and cultural practices that she identifies. In this perspective, this present book can be profitably read as an attempt to take this basic insight and analyze it through a detailed analysis of a particular religious tradition.

A second work that bears particular mention here is Aaron S. Gross's 2014 book, *The Question of the Animal and Religion: Theoretical Stakes, Practical Implications*. In this text, arguably the most comprehensive attempt to theorize the place of animals in religion to date, Gross suggests that religions inculcate an understanding of humanity that he calls the "humane subject." This humane subject, Gross argues, is largely constructed through a tension between kindness and ascendency in humans' relationships with animals. As Gross puts it, "Humans' ascendency over animals (their use as resource, exploitation, domination) and humans' kindness and kindredness towards animals (shared vulnerability, embodiment, mortality, creatureliness) are pitted against each other to such an extent that one cannot be thought of without the other."[23] How humans relate to animals thus provides the template on which humans form their identity as humans.

Gross takes Judaism as his point of departure, with particular emphasis on the Jewish community's response to various scandals at Agriprocessors, a now defunct kosher slaughterhouse. While keeping his work solidly grounded in Judaism, however, Gross also suggests that similar patterns exist in other religions as well. As this present book demonstrates, Tibetan Buddhists did sometimes define themselves in opposition to animals in ways reminiscent of Gross's humane subject. That said, as I discuss in chapter 3, the basic assumptions about the distinction between humans and animals found in Tibetan Buddhism (and, arguably, Buddhism more broadly) differ dramatically from those found in Gross's presentation of Judaism. It should not be surprising, therefore, that while Tibetan religion certainly does reflect a tension between human ascendency over animals and a call to have compassion for those same animals, this is reflected in ways that differ, sometimes dramatically, from Gross's presentation. Overall, while I do not dwell specifically on the theoretical question of animals and religion, it is my hope that a close reading of this book in conjunction with Gross and Perlo's works will reveal new distinctions and subtleties in this theoretical question.

In addition to general questions of the role of animals in religion, this book is also deeply interested in the role of meat eating in the formation of gender identity, particularly masculinity. The connection between meat and masculinity is not news. More than twenty-five years ago, Carol Adams's *The Sexual Politics of Meat* demonstrated a clear link between male attitudes toward meat and toward women.[24] Since then, numerous sociological studies have confirmed that meat is deeply tied to masculine identity, to the extent that third parties often see male vegetarians as notably less masculine that their meat-eating brethren.[25] Most of these studies have focused on the United States or Europe, but some have looked beyond these frontiers, noting connections between eating meat and masculinity in India during the British Empire and in Imperial China.[26] As I note in chapter 6 of this book, therefore, the connection that I observe between meat eating and masculinity in Tibet is hardly unique. Rather, the situation in Tibet is a particular instance of a much broader pattern. By discussing the role of meat and masculinity in a new context, I hope to add breadth to this larger discussion. Further, by detailing a new, non-Western perspective on the meat-masculinity connection, I hope to add some complexity and nuance to this discussion that (important outliers notwithstanding) tends to focus on the Euro-American context.

In addition to these academic debates, it is my hope and expectation that this book will have things to say to groups outside the ivory tower, particularly those concerned with human mistreatment of animals. As many readers are aware, there are vibrant, ongoing discussions of animals and human responsibilities toward animals in many different fields and contexts. Too often, however, these discussions of animal rights draw primarily on Western traditions of thought and ethics. Further, when Buddhism or other non-Western traditions are brought into the discussion, their treatment is often shallow or otherwise problematic. By presenting Tibetan Buddhist perspectives in a complex, sympathetic manner, this book seeks to help improve this situation, offering new perspectives to activists and others involved in shaping human/animal interactions. At the same time, I would caution those who read this book primarily for insight into Buddhist perspectives on animals, asking them to note that I speak only of the Tibetan context. Those unfamiliar with Buddhism often take texts from one particular tradition to represent the religion as a whole. And while there is much in this book that Buddhists around the world would recognize, there is also a lot of material that is specifically Tibetan, and this discussion should in no way be taken to represent the Buddhist tradition as a whole.

Finally, I want to particularly highlight ways in which this book intersects with ongoing debates over vegetarianism in the Buddhist world. Concerns over eating meat have become widespread among Buddhists in a variety of communities, as James Stewart's recent book on Buddhist vegetarianism in Sri Lanka amply demonstrates.[27] Further, as I discuss extensively in this book's epilogue, there is a vibrant vegetarian movement among Tibetans both inside Tibet and in exile. Similar discussions have also been taking place among converts to Tibetan Buddhism. Even a casual perusal of magazine articles and publications on this issue makes clear that many of those involved see this as a new discussion. And yet this is decidedly not the case. As I demonstrate throughout this book, vegetarianism has been a topic of debate in Tibet for at least a thousand years. Similarly, many of the arguments that swirl around meat eating among both contemporary Tibetans and Western Tibetan Buddhists display at best a simplistic understanding of Tibetan ethical thought on this issue. As chapters 2 through 4 of this book demonstrate, Tibetan Buddhist attitudes toward meat are anything but simple, though that complexity often gets lost in contemporary polemics. Therefore, while this book does not actively take a side in the question of whether Tibetan Buddhists should eat meat, I do hope that it will offer information and analysis that will add complexity to these discussions.

Sources

For better or for worse, this book is based almost entirely on textual sources. As of the time of writing, I have consulted roughly 110 Tibetan-language sources, each of which mentions vegetarianism in one way or another. Unfortunately, many of these sources are frustratingly brief. To give just one example of many, the aforementioned *Life of Ngawang Lekpa* mentions only once, in ninety-one pages, that Ngawang Lekpa was a lifelong vegetarian.[28] Fortunately, some sources are more substantial, including some texts focused entirely on the question of meat eating and others that incorporate substantial discussions of meat into works focused primarily on other issues. These texts, which discuss vegetarianism in considerable detail, form the backbone of this book.

Whether brief or extended, the sources I draw on for this book come from a wide variety of genres and styles. I have found many references to vegetarianism in biographical and autobiographical works, but these passages tend to be brief. Works that discuss the various religious vows found in Tibet have also been a particularly rich vein. These include commentaries on the monastic vows, discussions of "three-vow" theory, and monastic rulebooks. Some of these texts provide substantial discussions of meat, but even those that do not can still help contextualize the diet, particularly in terms of its relationship with other Buddhist practices. Finally, I have drawn on several prayers and ritual texts. These works have been particularly useful for understanding the role of meat in ritual life. Individually, none of these texts provide a comprehensive picture of vegetarianism in Tibet. Collectively, however, they allow me to reconstruct a picture of vegetarianism that is both broad and deep.

That said, there are some obvious issues with my reliance on textual material. Most prominently, these texts represent the voices of those who could read and write. In other words, they represent the religious elite.[29] It is sometimes possible to read between the lines to discern more popular attitudes toward meat, and this analysis can help offset the inherently elite bias of most of these works. Fundamentally, however, these texts represent the voices of those who were not only literate, but who also believed that their opinions were worth writing down. Further, we cannot even be certain that these texts accurately represent the opinions of their elite authors. They were written with an audience in mind, and the opinions represented in them were calibrated accordingly.[30] It is entirely possible, even likely, that some authors sought to present themselves or their lineage in a good light by emphasizing practices (like vegetarianism) that they did not necessarily follow in real life.

It is also worth noting that I have found few texts that actively support meat eating. I have looked, but such materials remain elusive. The closest such work that I am aware of can be found in Khedrup Jé's *Concise Presentation of the Three Vows*.[31] In this text (which, despite its title, is hardly "concise"), this seminal Geluk master presents an extended discussion of meat eating. As part of this discussion, Khedrup Jé refutes several arguments others use to support vegetarianism, giving voice to a position that otherwise remains largely implied. In other places, however, Khedrup Jé is strongly critical of meat, and his text can hardly be seen, on balance, as supportive of meat eating. Beyond this somewhat ambivalent text, I have found no other precommunist literature that argues for meat in any length. My assumption is that since meat eating remained the norm across Tibet, few authors felt the need to justify the practice in writing. Or perhaps such texts exist, and I have simply not found them. In order to understand the logic that supported meat consumption, therefore, I have had to rely on those pro-vegetarianism texts that present their opponents' arguments. Fortunately, this is a common practice, and it has been fairly easy to reconstruct the positions that vegetarians were arguing against. In the absence of pro-meat works, however, these reconstructions must remain somewhat conjectural.

Because of these issues with textual material, I have sought to locate and incorporate other types of sources, including art historical, architectural, and archeological material. Unfortunately, I have found little that is legitimately relevant. A few *tangka* paintings of lamas feature implements suggesting concern for animals, such as a water strainer. Others provide a visual representation of textual accounts, as in the depiction of the Crushing Hell found in chapter 3. Beyond simply adding a visual element to this work, however, these depictions do little to expand or alter the accounts found in textual works.

Finally, this book has been informed by my fieldwork in Tibet, primarily in Kham, conducted over repeated visits from 2007 onward. Because of restrictions on research in Tibetan regions of China following the 2008 unrest, I was unable to spend long periods of time at individual monasteries.[32] Nor was I able to conduct surveys or other quantitative analyses. I was, however, able to visit dozens of monasteries across the region and to conduct more than a hundred interviews. This fieldwork forms the core of my analysis of the contemporary vegetarian movement, found in this book's epilogue. Most of this book, however, is concerned with vegetarianism in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion, and only two of the Tibetans I have spoken with were old enough to remember that time. Given the massive political and social shifts of the last sixty years, it is clear that my fieldwork among contemporary Tibetans cannot represent Tibetan practices during that earlier time. Therefore, while I have sometimes used contemporary ethnographic data to inform or illustrate my analysis of older textual material, I have tried to do so sparingly and carefully. In the end, this book is based almost entirely on textual sources, with all the advantages and difficulties this entails.

Outline of the Book

The remainder of this book is divided into two broad sections. The first, consisting of chapters 1 through 4, examines the place of vegetarianism within Tibetan religiosity. In these chapters, I try to create as complex a portrait of religious attitudes toward vegetarianism as I can, complete with a recognition that the arguments used to criticize meat are multifaceted and that their use varies by time and place. This project opens, in chapter 1, with a brief history of the diet in Tibet over the last thousand years. I chart a few of the many individuals who adopted such a diet, the context within which it was adopted and promoted, and some of the major shifts in rhetoric surrounding it. This story, depicting the development of vegetarianism in more or less chronological order, provides the background and context for the more analytical chapters that follow.

That analysis begins in chapters 2, 3, and 4, each of which looks at the place of meat according to one of the three sets of vows taken by devout Tibetans: monastic vows, the compassionate vow of bodhisattvas, and tantric commitments. Each of these perspectives is associated with one of the three Buddhist paths or vehicles and emphasizes a different aspect of the Buddhist tradition. Each also provides a distinct perspective on the question of eating meat. In this book I have chosen to adhere to this three-vow structure, with one chapter dedicated to each set of vows.

This choice offers many advantages and some significant disadvantages. First, while the question of meat is important in each perspective, the way it is understood differs, often dramatically. Approaching these perspectives separately allows me to explore these differences fully, while also remaining alert for areas of continuity and overlap. Second, many Tibetan authors, particularly those who address meat at length, organize their own discussions according to these three perspectives. By following suit, I am able to structure this work in a way that echoes the sources themselves. At the same time, however, this structure tends to flatten historical, geographical, and sectarian differences. As chapter 1 demonstrates, vegetarianism was understood and practiced differently at different times and in different places. I have tried to maintain an awareness of this fact, but it is inevitable that my focus on the three vows tends to obscure these differences. Distinguishing the vows in this way also disguises the fact that individuals usually practiced all three sets of vows simultaneously. Thus, while each set of vows brings a distinct perspective to the question of meat eating, the group also needs to be seen as a whole, capable of offering consistent guidance to real world problems.

In chapter 2 I begin this analysis with a look at the place of meat within a monastic context. I open by looking at canonical sources that discuss meat and monasticism, particularly the Vinaya's presentation of the rule of threefold purity. The chapter then notes that, despite the seeming permissiveness of the Vinaya, vegetarianism has long been associated with monasticism in Tibet and was often linked to upholding the monastic code with particular purity. To understand this seeming contradiction, I analyze the various ways that Tibetan lamas sympathetic to vegetarianism critiqued more popular accounts of threefold purity and other Vinaya regulations regarding meat. In doing so, I note that while vegetarianism was not explicitly mandated by the Vinaya, it did align with the larger renunciatory ethos carried by monasticism in Tibet. In the end, I argue that it was this association between the rejection of meat and the rejection of nonreligious social life that caused vegetarianism to be so strongly associated with monasticism, despite the explicit permissions found in the Vinaya.

Fundamentally, however, concerns over eating meat were not driven primarily by a parsing of Vinaya rules. Instead, the core issue was the apparent incompatibility of meat eating with the compassionate orientation expected by Tibetan Buddhist religiosity. Chapter 3, therefore, turns to a detailed discussion of the role of compassion in Tibetan discussions of vegetarianism, particularly as codified in the bodhisattva vow. Animals were widely considered to have feelings akin to those of humans, and killing them was assumed to cause intense suffering. For many Tibetan writers, engaging in such killing was obviously opposed to the ideal of compassion, often seen as the central tenet of Buddhist practice. Importantly, discussions of the different sets of vows generally view the bodhisattva vow as superior to the Vinaya commitments. Thus, in situations where the different vows conflict, an individual should follow the bodhisattva vow. In the case of meat, this means that even if a particular author accepted that meat was allowed by the monastic code, they could (and did) invoke the superiority of the bodhisattva vow to argue that monks should not eat meat.

If monastic vows are superseded by the bodhisattva vow, however, the latter is superseded by the tantric commitments, analyzed in chapter 4. These commitments complicate the situation concerning vegetarianism because they are almost universally interpreted to *require* the consumption of meat. More specifically, these vows require practitioners to consume the five meats—human, dog, horse, cow, and elephant—during tantric feast offerings.[33] Some Tibetans seem to have interpreted this requirement to mean that it was acceptable to eat meat on a regular basis as well. Not surprisingly, those lamas sympathetic to vegetarianism vigorously opposed such interpretations, arguing that the tantric commitments only required the consumption of the five meats, and those only within the ritual itself. Within this specific context, these lamas argued, the tantric vows supersede the bodhisattva vow and meat should be consumed. Outside of this context, however, the bodhisattva vow still applies, and meat should be avoided.

In the end, no matter which of these three perspectives is being examined, meat is largely (if not quite exclusively) condemned. Indeed, despite my best efforts, I have found few sources willing to argue *for* meat from a religious perspective, and none that do so without reservation. This does not mean that meat did not have vocal supporters, but those supporters rarely argued in religious terms, preferring to cite issues of health or economic interest. Looking at the issue from a religious perspective, the overall impression one gets from the available material is that meat is at best a necessary evil, and at worst completely incompatible with religious practice.

And yet, despite this consistent condemnation of meat eating, vegetarianism remained rare. The second section of this book asks why. Here, I turn my attention away from religious arguments to examine those aspects of Tibetan culture that opposed vegetarianism. Chapter 5 begins this process by examining perceptions of the role of meat in human health. Many Tibetans assumed, with the support of Tibetan medical tradition, that meat was necessary for human health to flourish. Concerns over health, in fact, are by far the most frequent critique of vegetarianism. Without meat, the body's energies would become unbalanced and the body would become weak and feeble. Even adamant vegetarians sometimes made allowances for people who were old, infirm, or whose bodies were otherwise incapable of relinquishing meat. In a few instances, a lack of meat was even blamed for the premature death of vegetarian lamas. For all of these reasons, meat was often seen as a necessary evil, morally questionable but required nonetheless.

Not all Tibetans saw meat as a necessary evil, however. For many, it was understood simply as a good, morally neutral (or even positive) part of the diet. In chapter 6 I examine the circumstances in which meat, widely derided by religious practitioners, could still be seen in a positive light. In particular, I highlight two perspectives in which meat was seen as a good thing, both of which were in tension with the religious perspective discussed previously. The first of these focused on economic gain and saw meat as a wholly appropriate way to enjoy and display one's success on this front. The second of these alternate perspectives prioritized an idealized vision of heroic masculinity. In this perspective, eating meat was both necessary for the development of physical strength and a symbolic expression of dominance over animals (in itself a profoundly masculine virtue in Tibet). As this discussion makes clear, Buddhism was not the only ideal shaping Tibetan culture. And in these alternate ideals, meat was no longer seen as a necessary evil, but a valorized, positive element of cultural identity. In the end, I present meat eating in pre-communist Tibet as a contested space, pulled between multiple competing ideals and demands. More specifically, I argue that vegetarianism was located at the nexus of a three-way tension between religious ideals, perceived medical need, and alternate perspectives that ignored (or diminished) religious ideals and saw meat simply as a good thing, part of a well-lived life.

Though they may not have articulated them in precisely the way I have, Tibetan religious leaders were well aware of these tensions surrounding meat, and chapter 7 examines the various ways they tried to balance the competing religious and cultural ideals that swirled around vegetarianism. Only a few lamas demanded strict vegetarianism among their students. Much more common was the adoption of one or more strategies that sought to promote vegetarianism while also acknowledging the practical and cultural difficulties of a vegetarian diet. For some, this meant a graduated system with different practices for different social categories. Lamas, for instance, might be called on to adopt full vegetarianism, while ordinary monks and laypeople might be allowed to eat meat, perhaps after performing purificatory rituals. Other lamas advocated eating only the meat of animals that had died a natural death, seeking to derive the health benefits of meat without bearing responsibility for the death of the animal. Still others seem to have regarded the whole issue as insoluble, acknowledging meat as wrong but feeling that it simply could not be relinquished. This analysis gives insight into not only the ways Tibetan social and cultural norms sometimes conflicted, but also the strategies used by some lamas to actively address these tensions.

The main body of this book, focused on vegetarianism in the pre-communist period, concludes with chapter 7. In an extended epilogue, however, I turn my attention to the contemporary vegetarian movement. Over the past decade, vegetarianism has spread swiftly across the Tibetan plateau, far eclipsing its previous popularity. To understand this remarkable shift, I return to the tensions that surrounded vegetarianism in the pre-communist period. These tensions, which served to check the rise of vegetarianism throughout that period, have changed remarkably since Chinese communist forces asserted their authority in the early 1950s. In particular, increased awareness of Western medicine has dramatically eroded the idea that meat is necessary for human health, enabling large numbers of people to draw on traditional religious arguments against meat and adopt vegetarianism without concern for health ramifications. The vegetarian movement, therefore, is best understood not as a new form of Tibetan culture, but as a shift in the balance between the tensions that have always surrounded the question of meat eating in Tibet.

At the same time, however, vegetarianism has become intertwined with questions of cultural identity and resistance against the central state. For some, it is an expression of Tibet's Buddhist identity, practiced in resistance to state-mandated neoliberal economic policy. On the other hand, those who locate Tibetan cultural identity primarily in nomadic and other forms of lay life sometimes see vegetarianism, which negatively affects the nomadic economy, as a threat to Tibetan culture. Thus, the contemporary vegetarian movement has emerged as more than simply a question of individual morality and is part of an emerging dialogue over the identity of Tibetan culture more broadly. By understanding the historical tensions that surrounded the diet in the pre-communist period, we can better understand these contemporary debates.

ONE

A Brief History of Vegetarianism in Tibet

TIBETANS, BY AND LARGE, eat a lot of meat. Different communities eat different types and quantities, but there can be no doubt that meat in one form or another is one of the central staples of the Tibetan diet. Perhaps for this reason, many friends and colleagues—both Tibetan and Western—have reacted to this project with surprise, skeptical that vegetarianism existed in pre-communist Tibet.[1] Some of these individuals were aware of a few texts promoting vegetarianism, particularly works by Shabkar and Patrül Rinpoché that are widely available in English.[2] Others acknowledged that some contemporary Tibetans were becoming vegetarian, but they tended to assume that this was something novel, a new aspect of Tibetan dietary culture. Few were willing to accept the idea that concern over meat eating was widespread in Tibet.

In many ways, this chapter is a response to that skepticism. In the pages that follow, I provide a more or less chronological account of Tibetan vegetarianism, beginning with the first references to such a diet and continuing down to the present. This story, I believe, effectively establishes that vegetarianism, while never normative or even particularly widespread, was nevertheless an established practice among Tibetan Buddhists. In so doing, this chapter serves as a rebuttal to the idea that vegetarianism was foreign to Tibet, while also providing the historical background—the who, where, and when—that supports the more analytical chapters that follow.

Vegetarianism in Classical Indian Buddhism

In the story of Tibetan vegetarianism, the most logical place to start is not in Tibet at all, but in India, with the figure of the Buddha himself. As Wendy Doniger has recently demonstrated, although concern with eating meat is not explicit in the earliest strata of Hindu literature, ideas that fostered the growth of that concern are.[3] By the time of the Buddha, those seeds had grown into an active debate over meat eating, with some groups and leaders permitting it and others abstaining. As for the Buddha himself, while some modern scholars have suggested that the Buddha may have been vegetarian, most accept that in all likelihood he both ate meat and allowed his followers to do likewise.[4] In the words of John Stevens, "It is well known that Buddha expressly allowed his followers to eat most types of fish and meat provided the food was pure in the 'three ways.' "[5] Scholarly consensus, with which I concur, maintains that, in all likelihood, the Buddha ate meat.

As interesting as these scholarly debates are, however, the Buddha known to modern historians is not necessarily the Buddha relevant to this book. Instead, I am interested primarily in the Buddha as his life and example were interpreted by Tibetans. For Tibetans routinely look back to the Buddha's archetypal example to justify their own conduct, a tendency that factors in many discussions of morality but is especially pronounced with regard to vegetarianism. Given the importance of the Buddha's example, we should not be surprised to find that individual Tibetans' accounts differ, sometimes significantly, in their details of his life—including on the question of whether or not the Buddha ate meat.

Those who wanted to justify eating meat had plenty of material to choose from. Many, in fact, looked no further than *The Foundation of the Vinaya*, a text that explains and illustrates the rules that form the basis for monastic conduct. Among many other rules, *The Foundation of the Vinaya* contains a story in which the Buddha is criticized for eating meat. In response, he formulates the rule of threefold purity, which allows monastics to eat meat as long as they did not see that the animal was killed for them, hear that the animal was killed for them, or even suspect that the animal was killed for them.[6] This rule is discussed extensively in the next chapter, so for the present it is sufficient to note that this story strongly suggests the Buddha ate meat.

This story usually provided enough support for Tibetan authors to claim that the Buddha ate meat. If someone needed more, however, confirmation could be found in one of the Buddha's interactions with his cousin and frequent foil, Devadatta. In one such story, also found in *The Foundation of the Vinaya*, Devadatta institutes a series of five ascetic practices among his followers, including vegetarianism. Devadatta knows that the Buddha views these practices as excessively austere and that he refuses to mandate them. By promulgating them himself, Devadatta hopes to prove his own superior holiness and draw off the Buddha's followers.[7] While the story of threefold purity suggested to many Tibetans that the Buddha himself ate meat, the story of Devadatta claims that vegetarianism was not only not required, but actually condemned as an excessively austere practice that could not be condoned.

Both of these accounts have been considered canonical by just about every Tibetan author I've come across, including those who advocate vegetarianism. To counter these claims, therefore, pro-vegetarian authors needed to provide an account of the Buddha's life that claimed he was vegetarian, without claiming that scriptures such as *The Foundation of the Vinaya* were wrong. Fortunately for them, several such texts were available, with the most frequently cited being the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. This text is associated with the Mahāyāna tradition, a path all Tibetans considered superior to the more basic form of Buddhism found in the Vinaya, and is best known for its explanation of the doctrine of Buddha Nature. However, in addition to this more philosophical discussion, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* also includes an extended passage—the better part of twelve large pages in the Degé edition—dedicated specifically to promoting vegetarianism. Here, after providing several detailed arguments for vegetarianism, the Buddha explicitly claims, "It is wrong to say that I have eaten meat or that I have allowed my disciples to eat it."[8] The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* acknowledges that this claim is in direct contradiction with the rule of threefold purity outlined above. It claims, however, that the rule of threefold purity was not the Buddha's definitive intention, but simply an expedient means used to help those who were unable to maintain a fully vegetarian diet. Modern scholars generally agree that the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and similar Mahāyāna texts were composed centuries after the Buddha lived.[9] Some modern scholars have even argued that the section of the text discussing meat was not part of the original composition.[10] For Tibetans, however, the text was considered to be complete and, importantly, to represent the authentic speech of the Buddha.

Given its canonical authority, this chapter of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* assumed outsize importance in many Tibetan discussions of meat eating. It was quoted by almost all Tibetans sympathetic to vegetarianism, and even those skeptical of vegetarianism often felt a need to respond to this text is some way.[11] Ngorchen Künga Zangpo's *A Letter to Benefit Students* illustrates this point well. In this text, the section on meat in the Mahāyāna is composed almost exclusively of a single, extended quote from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Following this quote, Ngorchen's own voice appears for only a single line, concluding simply, "As this has shown in detail, all types of [meat] are forbidden for those Bodhisattvas who follow the Mahāyāna."[12] For Ngorchen, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* provided a complete accounting of meat according to the Mahāyāna, and nothing needed to be added.

By quoting the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (as well as similar claims found in other Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* and *Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra*), Tibetan authors were able to claim that the Buddha did not eat meat after all. Further, by associating this perspective with the Mahāyāna, they could make this claim without dismissing *The Foundation of the Vinaya* as wrong or inauthentic: it simply preserved a teaching that, while expedient at the time it was given, was superseded by the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and other more definitive texts. In the final analysis, then, Tibetan conceptions of whether or not the Buddha ate meat depended largely on who was asking the question. Those disinclined to consider vegetarianism could easily claim the Buddha ate meat, while those who promoted vegetarianism could claim that he did not.

As important as he was, the Buddha himself was not the only Indian Buddhist figure later Tibetans looked to as a moral exemplar. Many perceived Indic Buddhism to be imbued with authenticity, and those texts composed by Indian masters were held in high esteem. Once again, those Tibetans inclined to look could find examples in which Indian masters criticized meat. The (roughly) eighth-century Indian master Śāntideva's[13] *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, for instance, contains a detailed and largely critical discussion of meat eating, including extended quotations from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*.[14] Similarly, Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*, his great commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra* that was likely composed in 1012,[15] claims that yogis should avoid meat, contrasting such virtuous Buddhists with morally vacuous Muslims, who, the text claims, believed that killing animals was a religious virtue.[16]

If we consider only those Indic sources available to Tibetans, the picture that emerges is one in which vegetarianism was not required but in which, at least in certain communities, it was praised. If nothing else, it is clear that eating meat was a topic of debate, with neither side fully vanquishing the other. This, at least, is how the Tibetan authors I have examined present the history of Indian Buddhist vegetarianism. No Tibetans that I am aware of have claimed that all, or even most, Indian Buddhists were vegetarian. Instead, in an implicit recognition that meat was an unsettled topic of debate, Tibetans sympathetic to vegetarianism tended to repeat the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*'s position: meat is allowed for most monks, but those of superior faculties reject it.

Interestingly enough, such a portrait is not too different from that painted by modern scholarship. Modern scholars, of course, have access to more sources on Indian Buddhist vegetarianism than Tibetans did, including archeological evidence, art historical evidence, and texts unavailable in Tibetan. Good examples of the last type are the accounts written by Chinese pilgrims to India, who concerned themselves not only with doctrinal aspects of Buddhism, but also with how the religion was lived. Yijing, to give one well-known example, travelled in India between 673 C.E. and 689 C.E.[17] One of Yijing's main purposes was to study the Vinaya as it was practiced in India, and when he returned, he reported that the Indian Buddhist leaders he had studied with did not feel vegetarianism was necessary.[18] Vegetarianism was already a well-established practice for Chinese Buddhists, and Yijing's report seems to have been intended as a critique of the way Buddhism was practiced by his own countrymen.[19] Yijing travelled widely in India, and assuming that Yijing accurately portrays his experiences, vegetarianism was not the norm. And yet Indic texts such as the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*—the last written less than a century after Yijing's visit—all contain extended passages critical of meat eating.[20] Read together, these materials seem to confirm the impression found in Tibetan discussions of Indian Buddhist vegetarianism: while many Indian Buddhists ate meat, others considered vegetarianism to be an important part of Buddhistic morality.

Chinese Buddhist Vegetarianism

Many Tibetans consider India the primary source of their religious tradition, but it was not the only one: Chinese Buddhism also influenced the development of Tibetan Buddhism in important ways. Therefore, before turning to vegetarianism in Tibet, it seems prudent to take a moment to address the practice of vegetarianism among Chinese Buddhists, if only briefly. In the portrait sketched above, I have presented vegetarianism in Indian Buddhism as an unsettled dialogue: most Buddhists probably ate meat, but there were important dissenters. In contrast, the question of vegetarianism was settled in Chinese Buddhism remarkably early. By the fourth century, in fact, vegetarianism had become common among Chinese monks. Even among lay Buddhists, vegetarianism was common as early as the fifth century.[21] In attempting to make sense of the popularity of vegetarianism in early Chinese Buddhism, Pu Chengzhong has noted that Buddhist vegetarianism aligned with preexisting cultural practices that saw abstention from meat as a virtuous form of asceticism, particularly when mourning parents.[22] Further, vegetarianism was actively promoted by important individuals both inside and outside the Sangha. Notable among these proponents was Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty, who issued an edict—sometime between 522 C.E. and 524 C.E.—that mandated vegetarianism among Buddhist monks.[23]

Vegetarianism has remained normative for devout Chinese Buddhists from that time down to the present.[24] This diet was so thoroughly connected to Buddhist identity, in fact, that some nineteenth-century Christian missionaries made eating meat a part of the ritual of conversion from Buddhism to Christianity. Without eating meat, an individual's conversion would be incomplete, and their Christian belief doubted.[25] In China, in contrast to Buddhist communities across the rest of Asia, vegetarianism has long been the norm.

From at least the thirteenth century onward, Tibetan lamas were a common presence in the Beijing court, and some of them participated in discussions about meat eating. Karma Pakshi, for instance, claims to have persuaded the Mongol emperor Möngke to avoid meat on holy days.[26] In 1709, the Kangxi Emperor issued an edict imploring Tibetan lamas to give up meat eating: "The lamas say that when they recite scripture, they are saving beings. But aren't those killed to feed you while you recite scripture also sentient beings? If you are able to stop eating them, and tell all the lamas inside and outside the temples to do likewise, then in a year you could save two to three hundred thousand sentient beings!"[27]

In the early twentieth century, when Tibetan Buddhism experienced a surge of popularity in China, the meat-eating habits of several Tibetan lamas—notably the ninth Panchen Lama—were the subject of sustained criticism from leading Chinese Buddhist figures.[28] In 1925, for instance, the reformist monk Taixu,[29] who was otherwise deeply interested in Tibetan Buddhist practice, criticized Tibetan lamas for their moral laxity: "When Tibetan and Mongolian lamas come to China and transmit esoteric teachings they look and dress like laymen and publicly drink alcohol and eat meat. In our country, we always think highly of the rules for the Sangha. [These lamas] discard them like trash!"[30]

All these interactions took place in China. So while it is clear that when Tibetan lamas travelled to China they might expect to encounter concern over their diet, it is less clear that Chinese ideas about the importance of vegetarianism had penetrated into Tibet itself. Tuken Chökyi Nyima's 1802 *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Teachings*, an encyclopedic account of various Buddhist sects, notes in passing that Chinese Buddhists do not eat meat.[31] Tuken does little with this information, however, offering no further comment on the issue. At roughly the same time, Changlung Paṇḍita adopted vegetarianism at the age of thirteen, following a pilgrimage to Wutaishan in China.[32] This decision was warmly praised by his famous master, Changkya Rolpé Dorjé, who had also spent considerable time in China.[33]

Beyond these few figures, however, there is little evidence to suggest that the influence of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism (or even knowledge of it) penetrated to other regions of Tibet. I have no data to suggest, for example, that anyone in Tibet ever heard of the Kangxi Emperor's edict, let alone decided to follow it. More significantly, while many of the texts I have consulted praise Indian Buddhists (and sometimes even non-Buddhists) for their vegetarianism, none have cited a single Chinese source, or praised Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism. In part, this may be attributable to language difficulties: prior to recent decades, few Tibetans would have been able to read Chinese. This seeming lack of interest in Chinese sources on vegetarianism, however, may also be because many Tibetans regarded Chinese Buddhism as significantly less authentic than Indian Buddhism. They are, therefore, less likely to look to Chinese sources to support their own position on any issue, including vegetarianism. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that Tibetan authors opposed to meat never cited Chinese sources, despite the fact that China is the only Buddhist culture where vegetarianism was normative.

Vegetarianism in Tibet

With that discussion of Indic and Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism as a background, I can now turn to Tibet. Human beings have populated the Tibetan plateau for at least eight thousand years, and quite possibly much longer.[34] While early Tibetans left no written records, they did leave a significant body of rock art, some of which features hunting.[35] Assuming that hunting was done for the production of meat (rather than, say, as a purely ritualistic act or sacrifice), this means that much of the earliest evidence for human/animal relationships in Tibet highlights the acquisition of meat.

The earliest reliably dated evidence that anyone questioned such a diet comes from a text known as PT 126, discovered in the Dunhuang cave complex. Like other Dunhuang manuscripts, this text can date to no later than the first decade of the eleventh century, when the caves at Dunhuang were sealed. PT 126 contains an extended discussion of Buddhist morality, seemingly targeted at the nobility. Among other concerns, it states that "even to look at meat or alcohol is to risk one's life."[36] While the passage is only a single line, it is the earliest critique of meat that I am aware of in Tibetan, holding out the uncertain possibility that vegetarianism may have been at least an occasional practice among Buddhists of that time.[37]

A similarly brief passage about vegetarianism can also be found in *The Testament of Ba*. This text is a history of the eighth-century Emperor Tri Songdetsen's reign. It claims to have been written by Ba, one of the emperor's ministers, and contains a passing reference to an official, Namchiwé Senggo Lhalung Zik, who had "taken the vow of refraining from eating meat, drinking alcohol and even eating butter."[38] The *Testament of Ba* is one of the most important sources scholars have for the history of the Tibetan Imperial Period, but its precise dating has been vigorously debated.[39] Recently, Sam van Schaik and Kazushi Iwao have discovered a small fragment of the text contained in the materials unearthed at Dunhuang, indicating that at least a portion of the text dates to no later than the first decade of the eleventh century.[40] Unfortunately, it is impossible to know for certain whether the single reference to vegetarianism in this text dates to this period, or whether it is a later interpolation. Even assuming that the entire text was written in the eighth or ninth century, however, the reference to vegetarianism is brief and I cannot even be certain it was motivated by Buddhist morality (it may, for instance, have simply been an ascetic practice, perhaps taken up during the time of mourning, as was common in China).[41] In any case, the introduction of Buddhism during this time did not immediately remove animal sacrifice from Tibetans' religious repertoire, as attested by the rituals surrounding the Sino-Tibetan treatises of 783 and 821, during which many animals were slaughtered.[42] Even if Buddhist-inspired vegetarianism was present in the eighth or ninth centuries, it may not have been either widespread or influential.

Most Tibetan histories differentiate between early and later disseminations of Buddhism. The early dissemination begins with the introduction of Buddhism in the seventh century and runs into the middle of the ninth. Unfortunately, only a limited number of reliable sources are available for this period, or the two centuries that followed it—sometimes misleadingly labeled the dark ages. Uncovering the history of the early dissemination, therefore, can sometimes lead to the type of historical gymnastics demonstrated in the previous two paragraphs, where single lines of text are wrung for every drop of meaning they can convey.

Fortunately, the situation changes dramatically with the beginning of the second dissemination in the early to mid-eleventh century. This period was marked by a flurry of Buddhist activity, including inviting Indian Buddhist masters to teach and help translate Sanskrit texts into Tibetan. Among the earliest and most famous of these figures was Atiśa Dīpaṃkara-śrījñāna, active in Tibet in the mid-eleventh century. Atiśa remained in Tibet for only a few years, but his legacy has influenced later Tibetans down to the present day. Among the texts traditionally attributed to Atiśa is *The Book of Kadam*, a series of dialogues between himself and his main Tibetan disciple, Dromtön Gyelwé Jungné.[43] In these dialogues, Atiśa repeatedly critiques those he feels have left the compassionate path of the Mahāyāna: "They claim to belong to the Mahāyāna, but they disrespect the fundamentals: the profound law of cause and effect. They eat the three foods of outcastes: meat, alcohol and garlic."[44]

Atiśa and Dromtön were not alone in their concern over meat. The seminal, eleventh- to twelfth-century Bön master Metön Sherab Özer included a critique of meat in his *Vinaya Compendium*, one of the earliest sets of rules for Bön monks.[45] Metön Sherab Özer's critique of meat hinges on the compassionate ideal and is quite visceral:

> By definition, this thing called "meat" comes from the killing of animals. Being without mercy sends one to hell. With great regret, abandon eating it. This thing called "meat" comes from a father and a mother. These are its causes and conditions. If you saw this with your eyes, you would tremble with fear. How pitiful it would be to take it in your hands! Just smelling it brings on nausea. Once it is tasted by the tongue, how can it be kept down? For these reasons, it should be abandoned.[46]

For all of Metön Sherab Özer's rhetoric, however, there is no evidence to suggest that vegetarianism flourished in his community. Nor, for that matter, do the available sources say much about Atiśa and Dromtön's community. Vegetarianism may have been common in these groups, or it may have been limited to a few isolated members of the religious elite whose financial position would have made the diet considerably easier to maintain.

Some evidence, however, suggests that vegetarianism may have been common in the community centered on Pakmodrupa, an important early master who flourished in the mid-twelfth century. The sources for Pakmodrupa's own vegetarianism are somewhat limited,[47] but there is good evidence that two of his primary disciples, Jigten Sumgön[48] and Taklung Tangpa,[49] adopted a meatless diet. Jigten Sumgön is widely recognized as the founder of the Drikung Kagyü school, and his vegetarianism seems to have set something of a precedent, so that for several centuries after his death vegetarianism was relatively common in his lineage.[50] For his part, Taklung Tangpa also appears to have transmitted the diet to his disciples, particularly Rinchen Gön, who passed it on to his students in turn.[51] These sources do not explicitly claim that vegetarianism was the norm in the communities, nor do they tell us how many of these masters' students may have taken up the call. The repeated references to vegetarianism in these schools, however, does suggest that the diet may have been relatively common in some communities, even if it remained rare among Buddhists in Tibet more broadly.

The period under discussion here, from the beginning of the second dissemination in the early eleventh century through the middle of the thirteenth, is often called the "Tibetan Renaissance." As Ronald Davidson has demonstrated so clearly, this was a time of intense religious activity, with a variety of new texts and practices introduced from India and a vibrant competition among religious leaders for legitimacy and patronage.[52] Vegetarianism, it seems, was a part of this discussion. Vegetarianism may never have been normative (at least, I have no evidence to suggest that it was), but it was certainly an option. It was adopted by several individual lamas—distinct from each other in terms of time, place, and sectarian tradition—and may even have been common in some communities.

Unfortunately, none of the sources from this era are more than a few lines long. The passage by Metön Sherab Özer quoted above, in fact, is the longest and most detailed I am aware of. By the thirteenth century, this situation changes, and the first detailed critiques of meat emerge. The first of these was written by the thirteenth-century founder of the Jonang school, Dolpopa Sherab Gyeltsen. Dolpopa's *Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol* is structured around the three sets of vows that Tibetan monks undertake (the monastic vows of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vow, and the tantric commitments) and is made up primarily of scriptural citations critical of meat. While this means that Dolpopa's own voice is often obscured, this text still provides our first real insight into the arguments used to support vegetarianism. Importantly (if not surprisingly) the emphasis is on meat's incompatibility with the compassion expected of a good Buddhist. Dolpopa also repeatedly criticizes his opponents' positions, giving insight into the arguments used *against* vegetarianism.[53] For the first time, we can see not only that a debate over meat occurred, but also what the contours of that debate were.

A century later, Ngorchen Künga Zangpo wrote *A Letter to Benefit Students.* Longer and more detailed than Dolpopa's work, Ngorchen's *Letter* is also structured around the three vows, emphasizing the incompatibility of meat and the compassionate attitude a monk should adopt.[54] Unlike in Dolpopa's case, however, there is considerable evidence that Ngorchen not only argued against meat, but that he also instituted a policy of vegetarianism among his students. Ngorchen founded Ngor Ewam Chöden Monastery in 1429, in part out of frustration with the lax standards at other Sakya institutions.[55] According to Sangyé Püntsok, a biographer writing roughly two and a half centuries after Ngorchen lived, Ngorchen insisted on a strict interpretation of the monastic code within the walls of Ngor, including banning all meat, alcohol, and even the mere presence of women.[56] Further, many of Ngorchen's early successors at Ngor were also vegetarian. Finally, the centrality of vegetarianism at Ngor is suggested in an identical passage found in the biographies of Lowo Khenchen and Sangyé Gyeltsen. Both were senior Ngor lamas, with Lowo Khenchen active in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and Sangyé Gyeltsen a little less than a century later. In this passage, repeated identically in both texts, the authors conclude, "In short, abandoning meat and alcohol is one of our traditions at Ngor. It must, therefore, be observed scrupulously."[57] For these authors, writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, vegetarianism was not only important, it was also a characteristic of their tradition. For at least a few centuries, it seems, a strong culture of vegetarianism flourished at Ngor Monastery.[58]

At roughly the same time, the question of meat eating also emerged in the nascent Geluk tradition. Khedrup Jé Gelek Pelzang, one of Tsongkhapa's direct disciples, dedicated a long section of his *Concise Presentation of the Three Vows* to the question of meat eating.[59] Unlike some of the other texts discussed here, this work does not reject all meat out of hand. Indeed, Khedrup Jé seems quite concerned to balance the permissions he finds in canonical texts (particularly the Vinaya) with his concern that these texts might be misinterpreted to allow meat eating that is actually driven by gluttony rather than sober reflection. Khedrup Jé's text, one of the most difficult and nuanced discussions of meat in Tibetan literature, is discussed in more detail across the remainder of this book. For now, it is sufficient to note that Khedrup Jé composed his text in the early fifteenth century, less than a century after Dolpopa's work and within decades of the founding of Ngor monastery.

Indeed, this period, roughly from the thirteenth through the fifteenth century, marks something of a high-water mark for vegetarianism in Tibet. In addition to Dolpopa and Ngorchen, many other lamas adopted vegetarianism. Among these were such prominent figures as the fourth Karmapa, Rolpé Dorjé, who "guarded his monastic commitments with great subtlety, not allowing even a hair's breadth of meat or wine into his presence."[60] Although brief, this passage also illustrates one of the more intriguing facets of vegetarianism during this time: it was strongly associated with monasticism. The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya—the version of the monastic code adhered to in Tibet—explicitly allows monks to eat meat, as long as it has threefold purity. And yet most, if not quite all, references to vegetarianism from this time connect the practice to monasticism. These connections are explored in detail in the next chapter of this book, but for now it is worth noting that at that time, more than at any other point in Tibetan history, vegetarianism was clearly a practice for monks.

By the sixteenth century, references to vegetarianism in biographical literature begin to decline, suggesting that the practice may have become somewhat less common.[61] It certainly did not disappear, however, and several important figures from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries either adopted vegetarianism or promoted it among their students. In central Tibet, the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé, active in the mid-sixteenth century, penned an extensive critique of meat eating.[62] Mikyö Dorjé also wrote a rulebook for Tsurpu Monastery, seat of the Karmapa lineage, in which he suggests that "it is best" if meat is forsaken.[63] This is hardly a ringing condemnation, but does suggest that vegetarianism at Tsurpu was, at the least, an ideal. Further, the repeated references to vegetarianism in the biographies of the abbots of Ngor Monastery suggest that a vegetarian diet remained a part of life at Ngor at least into the seventeenth century.[64]

Vegetarianism was also appearing in regions far from central Tibet. In the south, Portuguese visitors to Bhutan in 1627 claimed that Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, the country's first ruler, maintained a vegetarian diet, consuming only milk and fruit.[65] In the eastern Tibetan region of Kham, the mid-seventeenth-century master Karma Chakmé wrote an extensive treatise on vegetarianism.[66] Further, Künzang Sherab, Karma Chakmé's disciple and the founder of Pelyül Monastery, also adopted vegetarianism, as did his student Padma Lhündrub Gyatso.[67] Both Künzang Sherab and Padma Lhündrub Gyatso are said to have encouraged vegetarianism among their disciples, with one history of Pelyül claiming that *thousands* of their disciples abandoned meat.[68] It is unlikely that Pelyül had more than a few hundred monks at that time, so this number is likely inflated.[69] Still, it suggests that, even if only for a few generations, Pelyül may have been a center of vegetarian activity, perhaps similar to Ngor.

Despite these important practitioners and centers, however, the overall frequency of references to vegetarianism does decline significantly from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century. Vegetarianism was present, but perhaps not as widespread as it had been. This situation changes in the nineteenth century, when vegetarianism experienced a remarkable surge of interest, particularly in Kham among adherents of the Nyingma school. Although this nineteenth-century vegetarian revival was centered in Kham, its intellectual roots can be found in the works of Jigmé Lingpa, active in the late eighteenth century, and Shabkar Tsokdrük Rangdröl, in the early nineteenth.

Jigmé Lingpa's *Autobiography* demonstrates a continuing affection and concern for animals, though it is less clear whether Jigmé Lingpa himself was a vegetarian.[70] Whatever his personal diet, however, he repeatedly denounces meat eating, terming it a "sinful food" and warning his followers to avoid it whenever possible.[71] In doing so, he uses some of the most vivid imagery I have seen up until this point. Animals awaiting slaughter "tremble with fear in butchers' hands, panting for breath with tears streaming from their eyes!"[72] Prior to Jigmé Lingpa, most of the texts on vegetarianism took something of a legalistic tone, describing the faults of meat and the benefits of vegetarianism. While Jigmé Lingpa does not neglect these themes in his work, he emphasizes the vivid suffering animals undergo, seemingly trying to create an emotional, empathetic response in his readers. As we will see, he was remarkably successful.

Before turning to Jigmé Lingpa's heirs in Kham, however, we should look to the northeastern region of Amdo and the figure of Shabkar Tsokdrük Rangdröl. Unlike Jigmé Lingpa, Shabkar's long and fascinating *Autobiography* makes clear that he was an avowed vegetarian. After adopting vegetarianism, he notes with amusement that some sponsors are careful to remove all meat from their dwelling before he arrives, afraid to even let him see it.[73] Shabkar also wrote several texts on the need to become vegetarian, works that Matthieu Ricard describes as "the most sweeping indictment of meat eating to be found in Tibetan literature."[74] Ricard's catalog notes three different texts focused on the faults of meat and many others that treat the topic in passing.[75] Shabkar's *Autobiography* also provides one extremely rare piece of information: a census. Of his eighteen hundred disciples, Shabkar claims, three hundred adopted vegetarianism.[76] These are clearly round numbers, but they still give some insight into the size of the vegetarian community that Shabkar managed to create.

Nor was Shabkar the only lama promoting vegetarianism in Amdo at this time. The early nineteenth-century lay Nyingma master Chöying Tobden Dorjé both practiced vegetarianism and promoted it in his written works.[77] Notably, his encyclopedic *Precious Treasury of Sūtra and Tantra* includes a full-page critique of meat eating, composed largely of quotes from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*.[78] This single page is considerably less than Shabkar's literary output, but this text became one of the most important literary works for Amdo's Nyingma community, giving it somewhat outsize influence.

Both Shabkar and Chöying Tobden Dorjé had lineage ties to Jigmé Lingpa, though neither met him personally. In Shabkar's case, his *Autobiography* claims that he received teachings on several of Jigmé Lingpa's texts and ritual practices. For his part, Chöying Tobden Dorjé was a student of Jigmé Lingpa's primary lineage heir, Dodrubchen Jigmé Trinlé Özer (suggesting a connection not only with Jigmé Lingpa, but also with Dodrubchen's Nyingma communities in Kham).[79] Neither figure gives Jigmé Lingpa credit for their stance on vegetarianism, but given their lineage, it is tempting to think that they were responding to their predecessor's oft-stated critique of meat. This is especially true of Shabkar, whose vivid descriptions of animal suffering are strongly reminiscent of Jigmé Lingpa's. Even Shabkar's conversion to vegetarianism, prompted by the sight of sheep awaiting slaughter in Lhasa, echoes an episode in Jigmé Lingpa's *Autobiography* where the sight of sheep outside a butcher's stall prompts a powerful experience of compassion. Whether or not Jigmé Lingpa directly influenced these figures, it is clear that there was a vibrant community of vegetarians in early nineteenth-century Amdo.

While Shabkar, Chöying Tobden Dorjé, and others were spreading vegetarianism in Amdo, the diet was also flourishing among Jigmé Lingpa's lineage heirs in Kham. Although he never travelled to Kham himself, Jigmé Lingpa maintained an important relationship with the royal family of the influential polity of Degé, who published and disseminated his writings.[80] Further, Jigmé Lingpa's Khampa disciple Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu was a strict vegetarian and actively propagated the diet.[81] Most importantly, Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu passed his anti-meat ideals to his disciple Patrül Rinpoché, among the most important Nyingma masters in nineteenth-century Kham. In an echo of the language used by Jigmé Lingpa, Patrül's most famous work, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, pulls no punches in its vivid denunciation of meat eaters:

> These days, those who have the appearance of lamas are drawn in when a patron slaughters a fat, greasy sheep and [cooks] the quivering meat with the gullet and organs, piling the lot atop the still trembling ribs of a yak. These lamas pull their monastic shawls over their heads and suck away at the entrails like a baby sucking at its mother's breast.[82]

Patrül was widely respected for both his intellectual achievements and his humble manner. He also travelled widely throughout Kham, teaching students from a variety of sects and lineages.[83] *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, composed sometime in the late 1840s, appears to have been well received and printed multiple times, with at least one contemporary commentary.[84]

It is always dangerous to locate the genesis of a broad movement in the work of a single individual or lineage, and yet there is a strong correlation between the activities of Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu and Patrül Rinpoché and a sharp uptick in other references to vegetarianism in Kham. Moreover, vegetarianism in nineteenth-century Kham seems to have emerged first among members of Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu and Patrül Rinpoché's Nyingma lineage, with figures such as the mid-nineteenth-century master Nyakla Pema Düdül and, slightly later, Rigdzin Garwang composing texts entirely dedicated to the faults of eating meat.[85] Biographical sources also attest to numerous other Nyingma vegetarians at this point. Perhaps the most revealing of these references can be found in the female master Sera Khandro's 1934 *Autobiography*. While previous biographies and autobiographies tend to highlight vegetarianism, presenting it as proof of a lama's sanctity, Sera Khandro's mentions it only in passing.[86] This could be an expression of humility on Sera Khandro's part, but it also holds out the possibility that vegetarianism was common enough in early twentieth-century Kham that there was no reason to mention it in an autobiography.

This repeated reference to vegetarianism among members of the Nyingma should not be taken to mean that all Nyingma religious leaders adopted vegetarianism. Among those who did not, we find the tantric figure Do Khyentsé, active during the mid-nineteenth century. Do Khyentsé is widely renowned as a great religious master who also fought regularly and was fond of hunting.[87] In one story, widely repeated by contemporary Tibetans, Patrül Rinpoché visits Do Khyentsé's camp and temporarily sets aside his own aversion to meat out of respect for Do Khyentsé's religious attainment.[88] Do Khyentsé thus represents an alternate path within the Nyingma, rejecting conservative religious practices like vegetarianism in favor of flamboyant conduct justified through an appeal to tantric Buddhist ideals.[89] Interestingly, however, this emphasis on unusual behavior did not necessarily extend to the rest of Do Khyentsé's community. From childhood on, for instance, Do Khyentsé's son, Sherab Mewar, "was conditioned by compassion, so refused to eat meat or blood."[90] Do Khyentsé's own lineage, then, provides a good example of the contrasting positions on meat that coexisted among Nyingma practitioners in nineteenth-century Kham.

While vegetarianism in Kham took off among the Nyingma, it soon spread to members of other lineages as well. The late nineteenth-century Kagyü master Karmé Khenpo Rinchen Dargyé, for instance, adopted vegetarianism and wrote a short prayer to reduce the negative consequences of meat eating.[91] More intriguing is the case of Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé, arguably the most important Kagyü figure of the mid- to late nineteenth century and a central member of the so-called *rimé*, or nonsectarian movement. Kongtrül himself was not a vegetarian and does not seem to have actively supported vegetarianism in any of his many written works. And yet, in *The Marvelous Gem-Like Vision*, his addendum to Jamgön Kongtrül's own *Autobiography*, Nesar Tashi Chöphel recalls, "I repeatedly heard [Kongtrül] say, 'I pray that I will be born as one who doesn't have to eat meat.' "[92] Kongtrül may not have been a vegetarian himself, but he idealized the diet. In the Sakya tradition, the most prominent vegetarian of this period was Ngawang Lekpa, active during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like many others discussed above, Ngawang Lekpa experienced deep revulsion at the sight of sheep being slaughtered while on a pilgrimage to Lhasa. Such sights would cause him to lose his appetite for days at a time, until he finally gave up all meat when he took his monastic vows.[93]

Beyond these Buddhist schools, members of Bön lineages in Kham also adopted vegetarianism during this period, with the most prominent being the early twentieth-century polymath Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen, who renounced all slaughtered meat at the same time that he took monastic vows at age thirty in 1889.[94] In addition to his personal diet, Shardza also wrote one of the more interesting anti-meat tracts that I have come across, *The Faults of Meat*. In this work, Shardza argues at length that meat is inappropriate, pointing out that it conflicts with the ideal of compassion, leads to rebirth in hell, and is simply disgusting. After this discussion, however, Shardza turns around and *mandates* meat consumption, arguing that meat is necessary for health and that refusing it would be like throwing away your precious human life. In the end, Shardza resolves this dilemma by advocating the consumption of "pure meat," especially meat from animals that died naturally.[95] In just seven pages, Shardza encapsulates the difficult position of meat in Tibetan religiosity, both reviled as sinful and necessary as nourishment.

Shardza, like all the other individuals mentioned so far, was a major religious figure with many devoted disciples. Such lamas were far more likely to have the details of their lives recorded and their writings preserved. This has given the story related here a distinct bias toward the religious elite. Indeed, with a few notable exceptions—such as Shabkar's census and some monastic rulebooks—few sources give any insight into the practice of vegetarianism among figures of lesser stature.

Fortunately, this situation begins to change in the twentieth century. By this point, traditional biographies are supplemented by both living memory and the types of local histories that are now being written and published. A good example of both is *The History of the Makser Bön Lineage*, a biographical history of a local Bön lineage written by Jampel Pawo Dorjé Tsal shortly before his death in 2010. *The History of the Makser Bön Lineage* recalls several vegetarians in this lineage over the course of the twentieth century.[96] Further, interviews I conducted with the author's son indicate that several other figures from this lineage were vegetarian, including Jampel Pawo Dorjé Tsal himself, though this fact is not mentioned in the text. As in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, the fact that this text does not mention that these individuals were vegetarian holds out the possibility that vegetarianism may have been common enough in some groups to be, literally, unremarkable.

Not all communities, however, adopted vegetarianism with such fervor. Notably, I have come across no references to vegetarianism among members of the Geluk school in nineteenth- or twentieth-century Kham. Even during the course of my many interviews with monks currently residing in Geluk monasteries in Kham—many of whom are vegetarian—I could not uncover any stories or other evidence of Gelukpa vegetarianism in Kham from the precommunist era. Given the presence of concern over meat among Geluk practitioners of other times and places, I can only assume that there were at least a few unrecorded Geluk vegetarians during this time, but the lack of evidence suggests that Geluk individuals and institutions did not participate in the vegetarian movement to the same degree as did the other schools.

It is also important to note that while I have focused on the vegetarian movement in Kham, such a diet did continue to be adopted in other areas of Tibet as well, if not as widely. In addition to a few scattered biographical references from across the plateau, notable passages on meat include the early nineteenth-century Bön master Kudün Sönam Lodrö's rulebook for Menri Monastery, the Central Tibetan monastery that is arguably the most important Bön institution in the Tibetan world. In this rulebook, meat is forbidden for all monks, at least within the monastery walls.[97] This prohibition may or may not have been enforced, but it clearly holds up vegetarianism as an ideal.

Before concluding this historical overview, it is worth turning our attention to the contemporary vegetarian movement. This period is discussed in detail in this book's epilogue, but it is worth outlining it here as well, if only briefly. In many ways, the arrival of Chinese military forces in the early 1950s marked the beginning of sudden, violent, and very dramatic changes in Tibetan religion and culture. The period spanning the Democratic Reforms and Cultural Revolution—roughly 1957 through 1976—was particularly traumatic. Poor agricultural policies lead to widespread famine. Most monasteries were either destroyed or converted to other purposes. Religious leaders were forcibly laicized, endured struggle sessions, were sent to prison, and were sometimes executed.[98] And yet, despite the turmoil of this period, Buddhist-inspired vegetarianism persisted: two lamas I interviewed, one in Amdo and one in Kham, claimed that their own teachers had maintained a full vegetarian diet throughout this period.

More recently, beginning in the mid-1990s, vegetarianism emerged as a favorite theme of several reform-minded lamas. These include Rasé Könchok Gyatso, a senior lama of the Drigung branch of the Kagyü school, who resides near Lhasa and who has published a text titled *The Benefits of Vegetarianism*, in both Tibetan and Chinese. Kham, in particular, has witnessed a rapid increase in the popularity of vegetarianism, particularly—as in the nineteenth century—among the Nyingma school. While many contemporary lamas preach vegetarianism, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, the aforementioned abbot of Larung Gar, is particularly important. Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö's personal charisma gives him considerable authority, especially when combined with his position as the abbot of one of the most important centers of learning in contemporary Tibet.[99] This stature is reflected in a comment by a young monk at Pelyül Monastery: "In India, they have the Dalai Lama. In Tibet, we have Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö." Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö has been a vegetarian since 1998, and has preached widely on the faults of meat and the virtues of vegetarianism. Further, his works on vegetarianism, both written and in the form of video disks, are widely available throughout Kham. He is clearly having an effect, not only on the monastic population at Larung Gar, but also on the lay population in surrounding regions.[100]

Lamas from the Tibetan exile community are also having a strong influence on the growth of vegetarianism in Tibet. This is particularly true of the present Dalai Lama and Karmapa, both of whom have argued for vegetarianism. As with Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, the Dalai Lama and Karmapa's statements on vegetarianism are widely circulated as texts and on video disks, reaching a broad audience of both laity and monastics. Particularly at Geluk and Karma Kagyü Monasteries, it is likely that the influence of these figures eclipses that of Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, who is strongly affiliated with the Nyingma.

Whether inspired by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa, or another figure, vegetarianism has become remarkably popular in contemporary Kham.[101] Most monasteries I have visited no longer openly serve meat during communal events, and some have banned it entirely. Beyond the monastery, vegetarianism has been taken up by a wide variety of laypeople. It seems to be most popular among younger generations, but I have also interviewed older individuals who have recently adopted the diet. The rapid rise of vegetarianism can, perhaps, be seen most easily in changing restaurant menus: when I first visited the region in 2007, finding a vegetarian meal was difficult. By 2012, many restaurants had entire menus of meat-free food.

This present book is concerned primarily with vegetarianism in the precommunist period. The modern vegetarian movement is fascinating, but the political, economic, and social changes of the last sixty years have been so dramatic that it is difficult to do the movement justice at the same time as accurately representing Tibetan vegetarianism prior to 1950. And yet, as I will discuss in this book's conclusion, there has not been a total rupture with the past. In many ways, in fact, the contemporary vegetarian movement is simply a revival of older ideas set in a radically new context.

Conclusion

The individuals mentioned by name in this chapter represent only a fraction of the many Tibetans who have adopted vegetarianism over the past century. In some cases, the need to keep this chapter a reasonable length has forced me to omit individuals known to be vegetarian. Further, there are thousands of Tibetan language biographies, lineage histories, and other relevant works, and I am certain that many, many biographical references to vegetarianism have escaped my attention. I am quite confident that as more of these become available, the ranks of known Tibetan vegetarians will swell dramatically. Perhaps more importantly, however, the individuals named here represent only those whose lives and diets were recorded in one form or another. They were, almost without exception, elite religious leaders. There must have been countless others who adopted vegetarianism, but whose dietary choices have been lost to history.

Looking back over this chapter, a few points become clear. First, vegetarianism was practiced in a variety of times and a variety of places. It was not always common, but there is evidence that for most of the last thousand years, someone was practicing vegetarianism somewhere in Tibet. Second, the popularity of vegetarianism seems to have waxed and waned multiple times. At some times—such as thirteenth- through fifteenth-century Central Tibet or nineteenth- and twentieth-century Kham—the diet was strikingly popular. At other times, it seems to have been a fringe practice at best. Finally, it is worth noting that the popularity of vegetarianism is intimately connected with particular schools and lineages and individual lamas. Sometimes, vegetarianism develops first in one tradition, such as the Nyingma in Kham, then spreads out from there. In other cases, a particular institution—such as Ngor Monastery—develops a strong culture of vegetarianism. Despite its ebbs and flows, however, vegetarianism has remained a consistent presence within the Tibetan Buddhist world. It may never have become normative, but it was always present.

In addition to vegetarianism itself, debates over the ethics of meat eating were also widespread. In the next three chapters, I turn my attention to the arguments used to critique meat and support vegetarianism. Each chapter investigates the role of meat in one of the three sets of vows commonly adopted by devout Tibetans: the monastic vows, the bodhisattva vow, and the tantric commitments. Individually, each set of vows brings a distinct perspective to the debates over meat. Taken as a whole, they reveal a complex and multifaceted debate, not simply over whether eating meat is right or wrong, but also over what factors and circumstances influence that decision.

TWO

Meat in the Monastery

VEGETARIANISM IN TIBET is propelled almost entirely by religious concerns expressed using ethical language. Tibetan religion, however, incorporates multiple ethical perspectives, and while these perspectives often overlap they do sometimes conflict with each other. To sort through these competing perspectives, Tibetan authors often approached ethical questions through a framework that differentiated between the three sets of vows that devout Buddhists adopt: the monastic vows of individual liberation, the compassionate vow of a bodhisattva, and the antinomian commitments involved in tantric practice. Differentiating these three sets of vows allowed Tibetan authors to discuss ethical topics in a nuanced and subtle manner, particularly when the vows did, in fact, contradict each other.

Over the next three chapters, I do likewise, dedicating one chapter to each of these three perspectives. Doing so has several advantages, but also two significant drawbacks. First, on the positive side, discussing each set of vows separately allows me to take each perspective seriously in and of itself. As these chapters make clear, the three vows present distinct and sometimes contradictory perspectives on the question of meat eating. Structuring the next three chapters in this way allows me to explore each of these perspectives fully. Second, adopting this structure allows me to mirror many of my main Tibetan sources. Many of these authors, particularly those who examine the question of meat at length, divide their own works precisely as I have done. By dividing these chapters as I have, therefore, I am able to reflect the structure of my sources themselves.

At the same time, this structure runs the risk of compressing differences across time and space. I am drawing on sources, after all, that traverse more than a thousand years of history, and that came from distinct regions. As I have shown in the previous chapter, vegetarianism was implemented differently in different times and places. I have tried to maintain an awareness of this across the next three chapters, but it is inevitable that some nuance will be lost. Perhaps more importantly, dividing my chapters according to each of the three vows masks the fact that most religious Tibetans undertook all three vows simultaneously. It was not a question of which vows to uphold, but how to uphold all of them. To accommodate the inevitable conflicts between each set of vows, Tibetan theorists devised sophisticated theoretical structures with which to prioritize the relationships between the various vows. I discuss this theory extensively in chapters 3 and 4, but it is worth noting at the outset that although each set of vows has its own perspective, in practice these perspectives were never fully distinct from one another.

Vows of Individual Liberation

The first of these sets of vows are the vows of individual liberation, known as *sosor tarpé dompa* in Tibetan and *prātimokṣa* in Sanskrit. These vows are not unique to Tibet; most Buddhist communities throughout the world include a version of the vows of individual liberation. The rules themselves exist in several distinct sets, depending on the status of the person taking them. Thus, while laymen and laywomen are not required to take any vows at all, they may adopt a set of five vows, including vows to abstain from murder, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, and consuming alcohol.[1] While taking such vows indicates a strong interest in religion, such individuals remain laypeople and are not allowed to wear monastic robes or participate in monastic functions.

While some laity did adopt this limited version of the vows of individual liberation, most Tibetan texts associate these vows with the practice of monasticism. In this context, the vows of individual liberation form the basic rules monks and nuns are expected to follow, though once again the details differ according to the status of the monk or nun. Novice monks, for instance, add only a few extra vows to those taken by the laity. The most important of these is a vow of celibacy, but novices also vow to avoid touching gold or silver and to avoid high seats, as well as a few other vows.[2] Full ordination for men, on the other hand, entails 256 distinct vows, according to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, the recension of the monastic code followed in Tibet. Full ordination for women is highly unusual in Tibet, but in theory it entails many more vows than men adopt.

The details of these vows are found in a variety of canonical texts, gathered into a collection known as the Vinaya, which I often refer to simply as the monastic code. This collection includes a variety of texts, including the slim *Sūtra of Individual Liberation*, which lists the vows and is recited twice monthly by the community of monks.[3] These lists give little context, however, so discussions of the monastic code frequently turn to other texts as well. Prominent among these is *The Foundation of the Vinaya*, a four-volume compilation that presents the stories that surrounded the promulgation of each rule.[4] In addition to these canonical texts, widely believed to have been spoken by the Buddha himself, Tibetans also approached the monastic code through Indian commentaries, particularly Guṇaprabha's highly influential *Vinayasūtra*.[5] As an aggregate, these texts contain the rules—and the stories behind the rules—that monks and nuns are expected, in theory, to uphold.

I wish to emphasize at the outset that this is theoretical, for while all properly ordained Tibetan monastics have accepted these vows, many—perhaps most—have regularly diverged from them in one way or another. There are a lot of vows, after all, and keeping them all is a tall order for even the most scrupulous monk or nun. Novice monastics have notably fewer vows, and laity take a mere five, but even these less-restrictive formulations remain difficult. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that these vows have been regularly broken. Sometimes these breaches were considered minor, as when a monastic used money, violating the vow to not touch gold or silver.[6] At other times, the error was quite significant, as when monks took wives, in flagrant contradiction of the vow requiring celibacy.[7] As one Tibetan scholar told me, the full monastic code is so difficult that in the entire history of Buddhism in Tibet there has never been a single monk who upheld every aspect of their vows.

At the same time that monks and nuns had such difficulty upholding their vows, they also regularly *added* disciplines not strictly required by a careful reading of the Vinaya. Vegetarianism was one such practice. As I show in this chapter, the actual vows of individual liberation explicitly allow monks and nuns to eat meat, as long as certain conditions are met. And yet vegetarianism in Tibet has been largely a monastic phenomenon. That is, most vegetarians have been monks, and many authors—despite being well aware of the permissions granted by the Vinaya—have explicitly argued that meat was incompatible with a monastic life. Thus, the question of monastic meat eating was far from settled in pre-communist Tibet. Instead, the long-running debate over meat revealed a landscape in which vegetarianism itself was rare, but moral and ethical concern over meat in the monastery was widespread.

The Rule of Threefold Purity

The vows of individual liberation contain numerous commitments. Among the most basic, however, is the vow to not kill. This vow is found in all Tibetan formulations of these vows, whether the full monastic commitments, the novice vows, or the limited set of vows given to the laity. To intentionally kill a human being, in fact, is one of the four actions that requires (again, in theory) someone to be immediately expelled from the monastic order.[8] Killing an animal is not as serious as killing a human, but it is still explicitly forbidden by the monastic code, where it is classified as an "offense requiring confession."[9] Intentionally killing another being, all sources agree, violates both the letter and the spirit of the Vinaya. There is a difference, however, between actually killing an animal and simply eating its flesh, and the Vinaya is not nearly as critical of the latter.

The most important touchstone in Tibetan discussions of monastic meat eating is the rule of threefold purity, or *namsum dakpé sha* in Tibetan.[10] This regulation is mentioned in several canonical texts, but the most important passage comes from *The Foundation of the Vinaya*. The relevant passage is lengthy, but given its importance to vegetarianism in Tibet, it is worth reproducing in full:

> At that time, the Blessed Buddha was staying at the Monkey Pond in Vaiśālī, where there was a chieftain named Sengé. One day, Sengé brought meat specifically for those monks living there, and they came and ate it. At that time, the Blessed One, having seen the truth of karma, did not eat. The meat Sengé had brought was given to those monks who had come. Some non-Buddhists[11] criticized those monks who

> had eaten that food, deceiving others and slandering the monks, saying "Chieftain Sengé brought meat specifically for the monks, so those wise ones should not have eaten it. Yet it was given to the ascetics of the Son of Shakya [the Buddha], and they ate this meat that had been prepared specifically for them." At that time, the monks asked the Blessed One about this, and the Blessed One responded, *"I have said that meat that is not suitable by the three ways should not be eaten. What are these three? Meat that has been seen to have been prepared for one's own sake is unsuitable to be eaten. Meat that you have heard from trustworthy sources to have been prepared for your own sake is unsuitable to be eaten. Meat that you think, based on suspicions that have arisen in your mind, to have been prepared for your own sake is unsuitable to be eaten."*[12] (emphasis added)

In this account, it is not the consumption of meat that upsets the non-Buddhists, but the consumption of meat that was killed *specifically* for the consumer. Thus, the Buddha proscribes any meat that a monk even suspects was slaughtered specifically for him, but allows monks to eat any meat that was not specifically killed for them. Writing in the early twentieth century, Khenpo Shenga provides a concise summary of how this rule was understood by most Tibetans: "Meat is not allowed if one has seen, heard, or suspected that the meat was prepared by the donor specifically for the eater."[13]

This rule serves to separate the meat monks ate from the sinful act of killing. If a householder invites monks to a meal, as in the account presented above, but does not tell them in advance that he will be serving meat, the monks can legitimately claim to be unconnected to the death of the animal. After all, they had no foreknowledge of the meal's contents, and by the time they show up, the animal is already dead. Similarly, if a monk begs door-to-door for food, and a householder gives the monk some meat, the monk can rest assured that the meat was not been killed for him. It is simply whatever the householder—who presumably did not know the monk would be coming by—had prepared for his own meal. In both situations, responsibility for the act of killing lies fully on the person serving the meal, not the monks involved. On the other hand, a monk who abides by this rule should not ask a householder (or anyone else) to serve him flesh. Nor can he accept it if a householder offers to kill an animal for him, or even if he knows that the animal has been killed with him in mind. In all these cases, the monk would be implicated in the death of the animal and be forbidden from eating its meat.

It is unclear how frequent random begging was in Indian Buddhism. In Tibet, however, the practice does not seem to have ever been widespread. Instead, most monks were sedentary, and depended on long-term, reliable sources of food. These sources could be individual donors or sponsors, but funding also came from land owned and either farmed or taxed by the monastery.[14] In either case, most monks would have known where their food, including their meat, was coming from. Indeed, some evidence suggests that large monasteries often had butcher shops in close proximity, the better able to supply monastic demand for meat.[15] Although these butchers would kill an animal with the intention of selling its meat to the monks, they would not have had a specific monk in mind while they wielded the knife. For most Tibetan monks, this seems to have been sufficient to satisfy the rule of threefold purity. When a monk went to the butcher's stall, after all, he would have been confident that the butcher had not killed an animal *specifically* for him.

Admittedly, I have not found any Tibetan texts that explicitly uphold such an interpretation of the rule of threefold purity. Many contemporary Tibetan monks, however, have used such logic to explain to me that meat purchased from a butcher meets the standard of threefold purity. Further, as I show below, this position is routinely attacked by authors who support vegetarianism—often in very strong language. Indeed, most texts that support vegetarianism find some way to insist that meat purchased from a butcher does not reach the standard of threefold purity. Judging simply from the frequency of these critiques, therefore, it seems that this interpretation of threefold purity was widespread in Tibet and may, in fact, have been the dominant interpretation of this rule across the plateau.

Nor was the rule of threefold purity the only passage in the Vinaya that was used to support monastic meat eating. Those inclined to support such a diet also turned to accounts of the Buddha's interactions with his cousin and frequent foil, Devadatta. In one of these stories, also found in *The Foundation of the Vinaya*, Devadatta asks his followers to adopt a series of austere practices, including not just vegetarianism but veganism: "The ascetic Gotama [the Buddha] enjoys milk and yogurt. From now on, we will not enjoy these. Why? Because it harms calves. The ascetic Gotama enjoys meat. We will not enjoy it. Why? Because meat causes the death of animals."[16] Devadatta's goal here is not just to create a code for his own followers. Instead, at least as recorded in this Buddhist text, Devadatta is explicitly seeking to undermine the Buddha's authority by creating an alternative, more rigorously ascetic order. Not surprisingly, the Buddha dismisses Devadatta's rigorous austerities as a publicity stunt, declaring them too difficult and therefore useless on the path to enlightenment.

As with the rule of threefold purity, Tibetans were well aware of this story. For many, it provided confirmation that vegetarianism was not required of monks. Yönten Gyatso, for instance, notes that rejecting meat and dairy are two of "Devadatta's excessive austerities."[17] Perhaps the most important reference to Devadatta, however, comes from the seminal thirteenth-century scholar Sakya Paṇḍita. Referring to those who adhere only to the vows of individual liberation, Sakya Paṇḍita claims, "Listeners may eat meat that has threefold purity. To refuse would be the conduct of Devadatta."[18] I return to this important and influential passage in the next chapter (and, indeed, throughout this book). For the time being, however, it is sufficient to note that, for Sakya Paṇḍita, the rule of threefold purity and the story of Devadatta combined to demonstrate that for Listeners, those who adhere only to the vows of individual liberation, vegetarianism was associated with Devadatta's excessive austerity.

Finally, it is worth noting that the rule of threefold purity is not the only context in which meat is discussed in the Vinaya. The actual *Sūtra of Individual Liberation* itself also discusses meat briefly. There, among a list of rules governing how a monk should acquire and eat food, we find the following: "The Buddha declared the following foods to be delicacies for monks: milk, yogurt, butter, fish meat, meat and dried meat. If a monk is not ill, and begs delicacies such as these from the homes of others, and chews or eats them, it is a downfall [requiring confession]."[19] On first glance this may seem to be a prohibition of meat eating. In context, however, it is clear that the concern here is not with any ethical issues surrounding meat, but with the fact that it was considered a delicacy. As such, the prohibition of meat found here is not concerned with ethical questions surrounding meat. Instead, it is one of poverty, and the idea that it is unseemly for healthy monks to enjoy luxuries. This is, at least, how all the Tibetan authors I have consulted have understood this rule. Because of this interpretation, this rule is not cited in any Tibetan discussions of vegetarianism, despite the fact that it appears to be a direct critique of meat eating.

Vegetarian Monks

Given the passages in the Vinaya corpus that seem to condone meat eating, we should not be surprised that many Tibetan monks felt that doing so was compatible with their vows, as long as they adhered to the rule of threefold purity. Indeed, it is worth remembering at this point that most Tibetan monks, as far as I can tell from the available evidence, ate meat when they could. And yet vegetarianism did exist in Tibet, and the curious fact is that most of Tibet's vegetarians were monks or nuns. Despite the permissions granted by the Vinaya, vegetarianism in Tibet was largely a monastic phenomenon. This association between vegetarianism and monasticism dates at least to the eleventh century. In a series of dialogues with his Tibetan disciple Dromtön, the Indian master Atiśa suggests that people should examine the Vinaya to see if meat is permitted, with the implication that it is not.[20] This is only a passing remark, and Atiśa's other critiques of meat do not specify a monastic audience. Still, whether or not Atiśa thought vegetarianism was only for monks, it is clear that this monk, renowned for his scholarship, felt that the Vinaya forbade meat.

Within a century, this connection between vegetarianism and monasticism had become increasingly well established. Sherab Jungné's thirteenth-century *Biography of Jigten Sumgön*, for instance, recalls that, "after receiving full ordination, [Jigten Sumgön] did not eat after noon, and his tongue was clean, unfamiliar with meat or alcohol."[21] In Jigten Sumgön's eyes, it seems, it was inappropriate for a fully ordained monk to pollute his tongue with meat. Writing seven hundred years later, Künga Tenpé Gyeltsen made similar claims in his *Biography of Ngawang Lekpa*:

> When Ngawang Lekpa went to Central Tibet, many animals were slaughtered in the camps. This gave rise to true renunciation and weariness with samsara. When he saw sheep being killed on the road, therefore, he developed true, uncontrived compassion for these slaughtered beings. . . . Whenever he would see the meat and blood of these animals, he would lose his appetite for many days, and therefore he did not desire to eat most food. Accordingly, since the time he requested monk's vows, he abandoned eating meat, drinking alcohol and eating after noon.[22]

Ngawang Lekpa was concerned about animal suffering well before he became a monk. So much so, in fact, that the mere sight of their flesh caused him to lose his appetite for days. He did not adopt a vegetarian diet, however, until the time he undertook monk's vows. For Ngawang Lekpa, vegetarianism was something connected with being a monk, rather than something to adopt merely because one felt compassion for animals.

In addition to demonstrating the connection between vegetarianism and monastic ordination, the biographies of Jigten Sumgön and Ngawang Lekpa also serve as convenient bookends to the history of vegetarianism in pre-communist Tibet, with Jigten Sumgön among the first generation of identifiable Tibetan vegetarians and Ngawang Lekpa among the last. During the seven hundred years separating these two, Tibetan texts record dozens of individuals who adopted vegetarianism at the same time they became monks. And these, of course, represent only those whose life stories were written down. There must have been hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of others who also adopted vegetarianism as part of their monastic vows.

Monastery rulebooks also suggest that vegetarianism may have been widely adopted within some institutions, at least on occasion. Unlike the vows of individual liberation, which applied to all monks and nuns, monastery rulebooks contain rules and regulations for specific monasteries or nunneries, often formulated in response to specific situations or problems.[23] In some cases, a single author might write multiple rulebooks for different monasteries, each implementing different sets of rules based on that monastery's specific situation and needs.[24]

Alongside regulations concerning proper dress and seating arrangements, some monastery rulebooks explicitly outlaw meat. In his mid-sixteenth-century *Rulebook for Tsurpu Monastery*, Mikyö Dorjé, the eighth Karmapa, announces that "monks gathered here should, in particular, not eat meat or eggs."[25] Similarly, Kudün Sönam Lodrö's 1810 *Rulebook for Menri Monastery* states categorically, "As for food: meat, alcohol, all types of garlic and onions, and eating after noon are forbidden."[26] Importantly, neither of these monasteries were fringe establishments. Both, in fact, were the central religious homes of their lineages: Karma Kagyü and Bön, respectively. Their rulebooks would have served as the model for the many smaller monasteries in their traditions.

While not explicitly forbidding meat, other monastery rulebooks made clear that such a diet was frowned upon. For instance, Terdak Lingpa's 1689 *Rules and Regulations for Mindroling Monastery* asserts that, "while we do not absolutely implement a rule of vegetarianism, it is important that festivals and the like do not have lots of meat, and that meat is not the main basis of one's diet."[27] Ngawang Lozang Gyatso, the fifth Dalai Lama, also carved out a middle-of-the-road position on meat consumption in the monastery. His 1676 *Rulebook for Tsarong Medical School* gives an extensive list of foods that may be served. He then counsels, "Except for the acceptance or rejection of meat, do not create a fuss over your individual desires."[28] Like Terdak Lingpa (his friend and sometime mentor), the fifth Dalai Lama leaves the question of eating meat up to individual monks, though he makes it clear that monks are allowed to refuse meat, distinguishing this choice from less significant issues of personal tastes and preferences.

We must be careful before assuming that monks at these monasteries actually practiced the vegetarianism called for in their rulebooks, however. Many of these rulebooks are still in force in contemporary monasteries, and the rules against eating meat are often bent or ignored. The new iteration of Menri Monastery that has recently been built in Dolanji, India, for instance, continues to uphold Kudün Sönam Lodrö's *Rulebook for Menri Monastery*, which we have just seen categorically forbids meat eating. And yet while monks at Menri refrain from serving meat during public assemblies, they often eat it when travelling outside the monastery or in the privacy of their own rooms.[29] It is quite possible that monks at pre-communist Menri did likewise, avoiding meat during communal meals but continuing to eat it in private. Even if the rules were not always followed strictly, however, the mere presence of restrictions on meat consumption in monastery rulebooks continued to proclaim vegetarianism as a monastic ideal.

Setting aside the details of the vows of individual liberation, this association between vegetarianism and monasticism makes sense: vegetarianism in Tibet has always been a religious undertaking, and monasticism is a religious lifestyle. Becoming a monk was not the only religious lifestyle available in Tibet, however. There were also communities of *mantrins*, so called because of their allegiance to the practice of tantric mantras. Like monks, mantrins were professionally religious, dedicating their lives to Buddhism. Mantrins, however, did not take ordination, and were free to marry, drink alcohol, and otherwise engage in activities forbidden for monks. As an external sign of their non-monastic affiliation, mantrins often wore white robes instead of red.

Despite their commitment to a religious lifestyle, Tibet's mantrins seem to have been largely excused from any expectation of vegetarianism. Perhaps the clearest example of this comes from *The Chronicle of Padma*, a treasure text revealed by Orgyen Lingpa in the fourteenth century.[30] In this text, Orgyen Lingpa asserts that monks should not eat meat: "For thirst, monks should only drink milk and tea. For food, they may eat grain, molasses, honey and cheese. . . . They may not consume black, polluted foods like beer and meat."[31] At the same time, however, Orgyen Lingpa is clear that the same restrictions do not apply to mantrins, "Mantrins . . . can eat whatever they enjoy, as long as it is not poison."[32] For Orgyen Lingpa, not only was vegetarianism appropriate for monks, it was *exclusively* for those who had taken monastic ordination.

This does not mean that no mantrins ever adopted vegetarianism. As noted in the previous chapter, vegetarianism waxed and waned in popularity, as did its association with monasticism. Sometime in the eighteenth century, in fact, a significant shift occurs. Prior to this time, most pro-vegetarian literature emphasized a detailed parsing of the Vinaya and its commentaries. After the eighteenth century, anti-meat texts become notably more emotional, employing vivid descriptions of animal suffering rather than legalistic analysis of Vinaya rules. This shift in tone both reflected and supported a marked increase in the number of vegetarians among mantrin communities. This situation was exceptional, however. For much of the history of vegetarianism in Tibet, vegetarianism was primarily a monastic phenomenon.

Interpretations and Critiques

These vegetarian monks were not ignorant of the Vinaya's stance on meat. In fact, many of them were considered great scholars, well versed in all aspects of Buddhist doctrine. In order to argue for vegetarianism, therefore, these scholars argued that conventional interpretations of the rule of threefold purity were too permissive. Instead of allowing meat to be consumed under most normal circumstances, these lamas argued, the Vinaya regulations were actually highly restrictive, allowing meat only under specific circumstances that were rare in Tibet.

Like all Tibetans, these authors accepted that the Buddha had spoken the rule of threefold purity. They did not, therefore, want to directly criticize the rule itself. Instead, they adopted a variety of interpretive strategies to argue that the rule, while valid in its original context, no longer applied in Tibet.

In making this argument, these authors drew a distinction between how monks and nuns acquired their food in India and how food was acquired in Tibet. In India, most Tibetans believed, monks had begged for their food from door to door, and so could reasonably claim to bear no responsibility for the death of the animal. In Tibet, on the other hand, monks did not generally beg for their food. Instead, they often bought food in local markets, where shopkeepers (including butchers) would set up with the specific intention of serving the needs of the monks. This changed the dynamic, these authors claimed, and the rule of threefold purity no longer applied. Perhaps the clearest example of this position comes from Shabkar's *Nectar of Immortality*, composed sometime in the 1840s:

> In the past, the Buddha and his retinue depended on alms for their food and lived in the forest without a settled abode. They did not hoard food or money and did not engage in commerce. Needless to say, they did not participate in the meat trade. Behaving like this, they were not connected to any form of wrong livelihood and any meat had threefold purity! Nowadays, monasteries are built in towns, and become even richer than the laypeople! Because of this, butchers come to live nearby, killing because they are certain the monks will buy the meat. And the monks buy as much meat as can be slaughtered. The killers and buyers, working in dependence on each other, directly kill thousands of goats, sheep and other beings. If this is meat with threefold purity and does not involve a fault, then these people must all have gone where everything is all-encompassing purity![33]

Earlier, I pointed out that most Tibetan monks seemed content to eat meat purchased in the market, since the meat was not killed *specifically* with that individual monk in mind. For Shabkar and like-minded individuals, on the other hand, the fact that the butchers killed these animals with the intention of selling them to the monastic population *in general* meant that it did not have threefold purity.

This argument hinges on a recognition that purchasing meat is directly responsible for the act of slaughtering itself. Eating meat, after all, is only problematic if it can be causally connected to the actual act of killing. But while this connection may seem obvious to modern observers (both Tibetan and Western) it was not always clear to Tibetans in pre-communist Tibet. Making the connection between eating meat and the act of killing, in fact, was one of the primary goals of many authors sympathetic to vegetarianism. We have just seen Shabkar make this rhetorical move, noting that if monks didn't eat meat, butchers would not set up shop near monasteries. This point is expanded on by the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé, who notes, "If there is not the initial observed condition (the eater), then the later empowering condition will not arise, and the karma of killing would never appear. If that exists, then this arises."[34] Others were even more direct. The seminal Bön master Metön Sherab Özer argues simply, "By definition, this thing called 'meat' comes from the killing of animals."[35] For Metön Sherab Özer, there is no need to establish a complicated chain of economic causation. Meat, by definition, comes from a dead animal and, therefore, contradicts a monk's vows.

Jigmé Lingpa's *Song of the Hunted Deer* takes another, more literary, approach to this issue. In this short work, Jigmé Lingpa presents a dialogue between a hunter and a hermit who meet deep in the mountains. The hermit, not surprisingly, criticizes the hunter's nonvirtuous career. The hunter, however, refuses to accept this critique, instead accusing the hermit of hypocrisy: "Even if it is hunters like me who do the actual killing, the meat is bought and eaten by all of the so called 'religious ascetics.' It is laughable to claim there is a difference between the sin of killing and the sin of eating."[36] In the end, the hermit wins the argument, and the hunter abandons his sinful occupation. Along the way, however, the hermit is forced to acknowledge the validity of the hunter's position on this particular point: "It is true: the religious ascetics who behave immorally, and the monks who uphold the 250 vows of the monastic code will all be pursued by their karma."[37]

In addition to examining the economic relationship between butcher and meat-eater, these authors also cited canonical Indian scriptures in their attempts to restrict the rule of threefold purity. For whereas the texts contained in the Vinaya corpus consistently allowed monks to eat meat with threefold purity, other Indic texts were not so permissive. Texts such as the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, *Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra*, and *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* all provided quotations in support of a vegetarian diet. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* was a particularly important source in the present context, as it contains a passage explicitly linking the consumption of meat with the act of killing: "If nobody ate meat, living beings would not be killed."[38] This line appears in almost every significant discussion of vegetarianism. The ubiquity of this passage demonstrates the importance of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, but it also suggests the importance Tibetan authors attached to connecting meat eating with the act of slaughtering. Once this connection was established, then eating meat became the moral equivalent of killing, an act universally acknowledged to contravene the Vinaya.

Taking a different tack, some authors argued that the rule of threefold purity was irrelevant, not because Tibetan monks and nuns did not beg, but because it had been instituted only for monastics of lesser ability. The Buddha, in this line of argument, did not want to drive people away from the Dharma by enforcing vegetarianism. So he instituted the rule of threefold purity, not as a definitive rule but as a way to allow people to engage with Buddhism. Eventually, he hoped, their capacity would expand and they would be able to adopt vegetarianism. Writing in 1463, the Sakya master Gorampa Sönam Sengé makes this point in his commentary on Sakya Paṇḍita's *Clearly Differentiating the Three Vows*:

> My own conception is that the Vinaya allows meat to beginners as a basic precept while they are preparing for [higher] stages. Later, having perfected the fundamental precepts and having studied the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, meat is forbidden, even to Listeners. As the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says, "I allowed [meat] that is completely pure in the three possible ways for the sake of restraint on the ground stage of the graded teachings. Thus, I spoke that way at first. Noble son, from that time on, [I have said] it is inappropriate for my Listeners to eat meat."[39]

Gorampa argues that even for Listeners, those who adhere to the vows of individual liberation but not the bodhisattva or tantric vows, meat was allowed only for the sake of those beginners who might find vegetarianism too difficult and, therefore, refuse to engage with Buddhism at all. Once a monk or nun had advanced past this stage, they were expected to adopt a vegetarian diet.

A final critical take on the rule of threefold purity comes from the seminal fifteenth-century Geluk master Khedrup Jé Gelek Pelzang. In his *Concise Presentation of the Three Vows*, Khedrup Jé does not dispute the basic interpretation of threefold purity sketched earlier. Meat that truly adheres to this standard is acceptable. Khedrup Jé is concerned, however, that this rule might become a cover for those whose interest in meat is actually driven by desire for its taste, rather than sober reflection. "Even though the meat has threefold purity," he argues, "there are some beginner bodhisattvas whose attachment to the taste of meat is very thick. They must not eat it without analyzing, solely out of desirous craving to have the taste of meat for their own benefit. . . . Therefore, bodhisattvas do not eat meat of any type."[40] Khedrup Jé seems to be pulled in two directions. On the one hand, he is careful not to discount the rule of threefold purity itself. On the other, he seems deeply concerned that this rule not be used to justify meat eating that is, in truth, motivated by desire. Whether this concern is motivated by his experience of fifteenth-century Tibetan monasticism is hard to say, but it is worth noting that this was one of the high points of vegetarianism in Tibet, and that monasteries such as Ngor were in the process of instituting broad restrictions on all meat. In any case, Khedrup Jé summarizes his discussion of threefold purity with a powerful quote, regularly cited by later commentators: "Some say that the Vinaya permits meat to be eaten out of desirous craving for its taste. I myself would never say this. Even in a dream, I would never say that [meat] like this is blameless!"[41]

All of these arguments address meat that comes from slaughtered animals, by far the most common source for meat in Tibet. But what about meat that comes from animals that have died natural deaths, perhaps caused by old age or accident? Such meat, unconnected to any act of intentional killing, is universally accepted as an example of meat with threefold purity. For many otherwise pro-vegetarian authors, in fact, it was acceptable to eat meat from animals that had "died naturally, having burned up their allotted time."[42]

Even such indisputably pure meat was not acceptable to some authors, however, as it could remind an individual how good meat tastes, and thereby cause craving for meat more broadly. Gorampa, for instance, cites the eighth-century Indian master Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, "Eating meat with threefold purity is an immovable obstacle to abandoning [meat]."[43] Even if meat really does have threefold purity, Gorampa argues, you should not eat it, as doing so will only cause obstacles to adopting a vegetarian diet. For Gorampa, it is not just that the rule of threefold purity doesn't apply to normal meat in Tibet. Instead, while nominally valid, the rule of threefold purity creates practical obstacles to what he believes should be normative monastic conduct.

Having interpreted away the rule of threefold purity in one way or another, proponents of monastic vegetarianism still had to contend with the story of Devadatta. In this story, we may recall that the Buddha's cousin, Devadatta, tries to distinguish his own community by instituting a strict asceticism, including not just vegetarianism but also veganism. He is rebuked by the Buddha, who declares his practices excessively austere.[44] As noted previously, this story was well known to Tibetan audiences and provided significant support to those who believed monks could eat meat. The pro-vegetarian community could not simply ignore it, and many authors attempted to reconcile this story with their support of vegetarianism.

Most frequently, this involved shifting the focus of the Buddha's rebuke from Devadatta's vegetarianism to his religious goals themselves. In this account, the problem with Devadatta's conduct is not his vegetarianism per se, but his attempt to use a strict vegetarian diet as a means to achieve spiritual insight. Traditional biographies of the Buddha claim that at one point in his career he nearly starved himself to death in the belief that mortifying his flesh would produce religious insight. It did not, and the Buddha later advised his followers to avoid seeking liberation through the adoption of dangerous austerities. But Devadatta believed that adopting vegetarianism as part of a broader ascetic regimen would, in fact, bring him liberation. As Ngorchen Künga Zangpo puts it, "The intention here was to compassionately care for Devadatta and others, who [wrongly] try to achieve a pure view merely by abandoning meat."[45] Devadatta's error lies not in his advocacy of vegetarianism, but in his attempt to use this diet as an ascetic practice for gaining spiritual accomplishment.

The eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé, makes this point more elaborately in his sixteenth-century *Letter on the Unsuitability of Eating the Meat of Our Past Mothers*. Here, Mikyö Dorjé argues that "Devadatta says that liberation is achieved through not eating meat. If, like him, we refuse to eat meat in an attempt to achieve liberation, then we really are following his discipline and committing a serious error, categorized under 'provoking discord.' But this text [*The Foundation of the Vinaya*] does not say that all Listeners who refuse meat are adopting the conduct of Devadatta!"[46] For Mikyö Dorjé and others, trying to achieve liberation through vegetarianism is, in fact, a violation of the vows of individual liberation. But this does not mean that vegetarianism was forbidden, simply that it should not be undertaken with the goal of liberation.

At this point, these authors' broad point should be clear: eating meat was against the rules for monks and nuns, at least under normal circumstances. Circumstances, however, were not always normal, and even the most adamant vegetarians allowed for exceptions. We have already encountered one such exception, in the form of meat from animals that have died naturally. Gorampa's criticism aside, many vegetarian authors allowed that such meat was permitted, as the consumer truly didn't have any causal connection—direct or indirect—with the death of the animal.

Another key exception involved situations in which avoiding meat could threaten an individual's life. In such situations, meat was often allowed. Such a stance is exemplified in Shabkar's *Nectar of Immortality*:

> When is meat permitted? In the vows of individual liberation, [it is allowed] if one is going on a long journey, such as from [the northeastern region of] Amdo to Central Tibet, and can find no other food. If you do not eat meat, your life will be in danger. Similarly, if one is weakened by illness and on the verge of death, so that not eating meat would cause them to die.[47]

Despite his strong aversion to meat, Shabkar allows it in cases of genuine need. Illness, in particular was a vexing problem for Shabkar and others like him. The specific role of meat in Tibetan medicine is discussed in detail in chapter 5 of this book; for the present it is sufficient to note that most Tibetans believed meat was necessary to support physical strength. Without it, a person would be likely to gradually weaken physically. If someone was ill, therefore, meat might be necessary. Authors who allow meat under such circumstances, however, often insert a caveat: the person consuming the meat must think of it only as medicine, not as a delicious treat. As Shabkar explains, those who are allowed to eat meat because of illness, "should reflect on the faults of meat and abandon all craving for it."[48] Like many others, Shabkar says that monks who are ill or who otherwise have a real need to eat meat may do so, as long as their consumption is driven by sober reflection on their needs, rather than desire for meat's taste. The critiques discussed previously, therefore, should not be understood as absolute prohibitions, but rather as critiques of monastic meat eating under normal, everyday circumstances.

Before moving on, it is important to remember that many Tibetans did not believe that the Vinaya forbade meat as a general rule. Once again, Khedrup Jé provides the voice of the opposition, arguing at length that the Vinaya does not forbid meat. He opens this discussion by pointing out that nowhere in the Vinaya corpus does it actually say meat is forbidden. "Some say that 'Eating meat is forbidden to all monks.' " He notes, "If someone says this, ask them, 'In which Vinaya text is meat forbidden to monks?' "[49] Khedrup Jé does not rest here, however, pointing to passages in the Vinaya where specific meats are forbidden, including human meat, tiger meat, horse meat, and so on. “As this says,” he argues, “it is not acceptable to eat unsuitable types of meat. . . . But it is acceptable to eat other types of meat. If you suggest forbidding all meat, you are making a general statement about meat based on specific comments on these types of meat.”[50] Here, then, Khedrup Jé takes a different tack, noting that the Vinaya does have things to say about diet. Surely, therefore, if the Buddha wanted monks to be vegetarian, he would have said so. The fact that he did not means that meat is not broadly forbidden. In the end, however, Khedrup Jé reveals that he is not fully comfortable with meat eating, arguing that “it is not suitable to eat meat under power of desirous craving for its taste, regardless of whether that meat has threefold purity or not, or whether it is killed or naturally dead.”[51] For Khedrup Jé, meat may not be forbidden by the Vinaya, but that does not mean that it is acceptable for monks to go out and feast on meat just because they enjoy how it tastes.

Finally, it is worth noting that all of the individuals quoted above are major figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. Jigten Sumgön and Ngorchen Künga Zangpo each founded important lineages of religious practice. Nyamé Sherab Gyeltsen, Gorampa, Orgyen Lingpa, Khedrup Jé, and Shabkar are each included among the most important scholars and practitioners of their various lineages and schools. A few of these figures, such as Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé and Jigmé Lingpa, are among the most important and famous masters in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, instantly recognizable to even casual scholars of Tibetan religion. These were by no means the only supporters of vegetarianism in Tibet, but their prominence suggests that the concern over the question of meat and the vows of individual liberation was not a fringe question, relegated to minor figures ranting on the sidelines. Instead, the pervasive discomfort with meat eating observed here was an important point of debate in the most significant Buddhist institutions of their day. Vegetarianism never became normative, but discomfort with meat was widespread.

A Good Monk

The discussion so far has focused on how various interpretations of the monastic code affected an individual’s choice to eat meat. Despite their name, however, the vows of individual liberation were never simply about individual morality. Buddhist monks existed in a complex network of social structures and dependencies, and the rules of the monastic code were often intended as much to control a person's relationship with society as they were to regulate individual morality. This is the case with the Vinaya in general, but is particularly true in discussions of vegetarianism, where the adoption of a diet widely recognized as both difficult and morally virtuous could significantly enhance an individual's social prestige and religious legitimacy.

Concern with public perception of meat eating is present in the earliest and most important discussions of monastic meat eating. We may recall that in *The Foundation of the Vinaya's* account of the rule of threefold purity, the Buddha is not responding to a query from a monk about proper conduct. Instead, he is responding to public criticism of Buddhist monks by rival religious groups. The rule of threefold purity, as presented in its most canonical formulation, was intended to insulate the Buddhist community from such critiques.

This pattern is not unique to discussions of the rule of threefold purity. In fact, as Shayne Clarke has recently demonstrated, most of the Vinaya's rules were formulated in response not to an ethical dilemma but to criticism from outside communities.[52] Rather than rules of personal morality, they are rules for public performance. It is not hard to understand why community approval was so important: monastics depended on lay support for the majority of their material needs. Without significant lay support, Buddhist institutions would have crumbled.[53] To the authors of the monastic code, these regulations were largely a vehicle for creating a positive public image of the Buddhist community and, thereby, securing financial support.

Like Clarke, Tibetan theorists were well aware of the importance of proper monastic discipline in maintaining relationships with the laity. After presenting a detailed list of the vows of individual liberation, for instance, the nineteenth-century polymath Jamgön Kongtrül argues, "If he will be seen, a monk should be careful about his robes. His behavior should be restrained. When he goes to a sponsor's house, he should sit in meditation posture and consume food and drink conscientiously. . . . Acting like this will make [the sponsor] devoted."[54] For Kongtrül, acting in a socially acceptable manner was an act of public performance, intended to cultivate a positive relationship with the laity.

Similar concerns are often found in monastic rulebooks. As Berthe Jansen has noted, "The reasoning often given [in monastic rulebooks] for creating certain rules is that if the monks do not behave properly the lay-people would lose faith in the community of monks and thereby in the Sangha, one of the Three Jewels."[55] A good example of this can be found in Jigmé Yeshé Drakpa's eighteenth-century *Rulebook* for the three monasteries of Pel-Narthang, Reting, and Gönlung: "During the summer dharma season, patrons must not hold meat feasts for those who have won titles or passed examinations."[56] Jigmé Yeshé Drakpa's *Rulebook* makes no mention of eating meat in private, but bans it during public celebrations. His concern, it seems, is not with the moral conduct of individuals, but with the public perception of the monastery community.

The perceiving public, however, would have been unlikely to know the intricacies of the Vinaya. Even many monks were unfamiliar with the details of their vows, let alone the laity.[57] Instead of expecting monks to uphold a long list of specific rules, most communities would have expected adherence to a broader, loosely understood renunciatory ideal. The exact contours of this expected ideal varied according to time and place. The monastic rulebooks, perhaps our most relevant source for understanding the social expectations of Tibetan monks, reflect a wide variety of concerns. Amid this variation, however, some basic themes do emerge: monks were broadly expected to avoid heterosexual contact, avoid drunkenness, avoid killing, and maintain a certain level of decorum.[58] In the passage quoted above, Jamgön Kongtrül does not suggest that monks cultivate sponsors by scrupulously adhering to the details of their vows, but rather that their behavior should be restrained. They should act with decorum, performing the renunciatory ideal their (potential) patrons wanted to see.

Vegetarianism fit well with this vision of monasticism. It was, after all, a difficult practice. Available sources almost universally agree that meat is delicious. Perhaps more importantly, however, meat was often considered necessary for human health. This point is discussed in detail in chapter 5 of this book, but here it is important to note that many people believed giving up meat would lead to significant health consequences, possibly even premature death. At the same time, there was widespread recognition of the fact that eating meat was connected, in one way or another, with the killing of an animal. Meat was pleasant and important for human health, but it was also morally compromised. Giving it up, therefore, demonstrated that an individual put religious goals above their own wants and needs.

The relationship between vegetarianism and monastic renunciation can perhaps best be understood through a comparison with the rules governing sex and alcohol. Like meat, sex and alcohol were almost universally considered pleasant, and while perhaps not considered necessary for human health, were at least not unhealthy. Unlike meat, however, the Vinaya explicitly forbade sex and alcohol. Further, renouncing sex (at least heterosexual sex) and alcohol were widely recognized as foundational for the monastic life. As a pleasant object that caused moral discomfort, meat mapped well onto the rules governing sex and alcohol, even while it was not explicitly forbidden to monks.

At this point it is useful to recall that Tibet also had, in addition to monks, large numbers of white-robed mantrins. Like monks, these mantrins were professional religious practitioners, but unlike monks they did not take monastic vows. In particular, mantrins were allowed—and often expected—to get married and drink alcohol. While mantrins were expected to be religious, they were not expected to live up to the renunciatory ideal that monks embodied. Nor were mantrins expected to be vegetarian. On this point it is worth recalling Orgyen Lingpa's *The Chronicle of Padma*, in which monks are explicitly asked to avoid meat and alcohol, while mantrins, "can eat whatever they enjoy."[59] Although not actually mandated by the Vinaya, vegetarianism was still structurally aligned with celibacy and teetotaling, causing it to be associated with the monastic, rather than mantric, ideal.

The fact that meat aligned well with such forbidden pleasures as sex and alcohol—but was not itself explicitly forbidden—meant that those monks and nuns who rejected it were seen as going above and beyond the basic requirements of monastic life. Vegetarianism, I argue, was a way of taking the principle of renunciation that was the basis for monastic life and applying it beyond what was strictly necessary. As such, vegetarianism publicly marked a monastic, in the eyes of peers and sponsors alike, as exceptional, superior to the mass of everyday monks and nuns. This sentiment was clearly expressed to me by a young monk in Degé, an important cultural center in Eastern Tibet: "When I hear a monk is vegetarian, then I know he is a good monk." While celibacy and teetotaling were expected, vegetarianism was a sign of true commitment.

In addition to such contemporary statements, there is evidence that vegetarianism served as a marker of religious dedication throughout Tibetan history. As noted previously, many references to vegetarianism in Tibet are derived from biographical sources. Such texts generally adopt a tone of respected admiration, sometimes even awe. Indeed, as Janet Gyatso and other scholars have demonstrated, the purpose of much of Tibet's voluminous biographical writing is not so much the presentation of historical fact as the creation and support of devoted faith on the part of the lama's students and lineage.[60] While there is certainly room for personal idiosyncrasy in such texts, the focus, almost invariably, remains the subject's sanctity.

Given these goals, it is not surprising that these texts largely present vegetarianism as an impressive quality, a sign that their subject is a dedicated monastic. Gö Lotsawa's *Blue Annals*, for instance, praises the vegetarianism of the fourth Karmapa, Rolpé Dorjé: "He guarded his monastic commitments with great subtlety, not allowing even a hair's breadth of meat or alcohol into his presence."[61] Tülku Urgyen, a prominent late twentieth-century mantrin, expresses a similar understanding. Recalling his own decision to become a mantrin rather than a monk, Tülku Urgyen recalls that he felt upholding the monastic life properly would be too difficult:

> The reason I didn't take ordination at that time or any time after was simply that I didn't trust that I could keep the vows. Not only did Samten Gyatso never touch women, he never even touched meat or liquor. Uncle Sangngak was not different. If you take monk's vows, you should keep them pure, like my uncles or like Karmé Khenpo. I have great respect for anyone who does so, but not for the half-hearted renunciate so common nowadays. Maybe it was my lack of pure perception, but I didn't see that many pure monks even then.[62]

For Tülku Urgyen, vegetarianism (along with strict celibacy and teetotaling) was a sign that a monk was a good monk, rather than a "half-hearted" renunciate.

Some Tibetan vegetarians were self-consciously aware that their diet contributed to a positive public image. Shabkar, for instance, was well aware that he was known for his vegetarianism, joking in his *Autobiography* that people were afraid to let him even see meat.[63] Later in the same text, Shabkar recalls that some jealous lamas from Central Tibet were trying to discover how he had become so popular. One speculates that he must have performed a special ritual to gain people's admiration. Another rejects this as an insufficient explanation, concluding, "However one looks, one cannot find fault with his conduct. So don't criticize him."[64] In Shabkar's estimation, his strict moral conduct, presumably including vegetarianism, contributed to his positive reputation and insulated him from criticism.

If adopting vegetarianism could project a public image as a conscientious monk, the reverse was also true: publicly consuming excessive quantities of meat was a good way to turn away the very sponsors the Vinaya and monastery rulebooks sought to cultivate. Tibetan literature, in fact, abounds with depictions of monks whose excessive consumption of meat serves as a marker of their broader inadequacy. In one of the most vivid of these passages, Patrül Rinpoché describes the defects of "the lamas of today," who eat meat without any sense of shame or decorum, "mouths glistening with grease, heads steaming, and faces newly stained red."[65] Similar sentiments were expressed by Yönten Gyatso in his *Lamp of the Moon*: "These days, you lamas and scholars embrace the form of religious practitioners, calling yourselves 'monks.' You present yourselves as refuges for all, in life and death. Yet you are able to nourish your belly with the meat of your slaughtered parents. Oh ho, such great strength of heart!"[66] For both Patrül and Yönten Gyatso, many of the religious figures they saw fell well short of the ideal, a fact that was demonstrated through their willingness to eat lots of meat.

Vegetarianism could demonstrate the religious legitimacy of institutions as well as individuals. Ngor Monastery illustrates this point well. Ngor is a major Sakya institution in Central Tibet, founded in the fifteenth century by Ngorchen Künga Zangpo. Ngorchen himself was a strict vegetarian who even refused his doctor's orders to consume meat medicinally. In addition to the example provided by his own diet, Ngorchen composed an important work criticizing meat, *A Letter to Benefit Students*. Among the most extensive anti-meat texts found in Tibet, Ngorchen's *Letter* asserts, in no uncertain language, that monks are not permitted to eat meat.[67] Biographical texts reveal that Ngorchen's successors took his advice to heart: for many generations, virtually all of the abbots of Ngor maintained a strict vegetarian diet, often citing Ngorchen's *Letter*.[68] Beyond just vegetarianism, Ngorchen insisted on strict monastic conduct at Ngor, including celibacy, teetotaling, and even a particular arrangement of the monastic robes that he felt adhered more closely to the original intent of the Vinaya.[69] One result was a widespread reputation that the monks of Ngor adhered strictly to the Vinaya regulations.[70] For the monks at Ngor, strict adherence to a renunciatory ideal, including vegetarianism, directly and positively affected their popular reputation.

As this discussion has shown, vegetarianism was not simply a matter of individual morality, nor simply a question of interpreting the Vinaya. While personal convictions and morality were certainly important, adopting vegetarianism also had significant effects on a monk's public reputation. Vegetarianism aligned closely with such core monastic practices as celibacy and teetotaling, but was commonly thought to not be, strictly speaking, necessary. As such, it marked its practitioners as deeply committed to the ideals of monastic renunciation, willing to go above and beyond what was strictly required. Developing such a reputation would, in turn, affect that person's ability to recruit and retain the sponsors that were so necessary for a successful monastic career.

Conclusion

This chapter opened with a look at the role of meat eating according to the vows of individual liberation. These vows, which constitute the basic rules of Buddhist monasticism in Tibet, generally permit meat eating, as long as the meat in question fulfills the demands of the rule of threefold purity. Most Tibetan monastics have interpreted this rule to mean that they could eat meat with few restrictions. As long as they did not kill the animal themselves, or did not specifically request its death, the monk or nun in question could eat without concern, secure in the knowledge that they bore no culpability for the animal's death.

And yet, despite these permissions, vegetarianism in Tibet was largely a monastic phenomenon. Most vegetarians were monks, and the practice was closely associated with monasticism. To support this, a vocal group of prominent religious leaders challenged conventional wisdom, arguing strongly that the rule of threefold purity did not apply in Tibet, and that monks and nuns should maintain vegetarian diets. The prominence of these authors and the consistency of their critiques demonstrate a widespread concern with the ethics of meat consumption by monastics. Actual vegetarianism may have been relatively rare, but concern over meat eating was not.

As discussed in this chapter, the concern and distress that these monks felt about eating meat was rooted in the fact that meat comes from slaughtered animals, and killing is a direct violation of the monastic vows. In addition to this attention to their vows, however, many monks were also concerned with another fundamental aspect of Tibetan religiosity: the need to practice compassion. Buddhism asks its adherents to practice compassion for others, a category that explicitly includes animals. Eating meat, many Tibetans felt, directly contradicts this fundamental aspect of their religiosity. The call for compassion, and its implications for the practice of vegetarianism, are the subject of the next chapter.

THREE

The Importance of Compassion

IT IS HARD TO OVERSTATE the importance of compassion in Tibetans' conceptions of their religion. Tibetan Buddhism self-consciously defines itself as a branch of Mahāyāna, or "Great Vehicle" Buddhism. And Mahāyāna Buddhism is largely defined by its compassionate orientation. In the Tibetan perspective, Hīnayāna, or "Little Vehicle" Buddhism, focuses on an individual's attempt to extricate themself from the suffering that characterizes cyclic existence. In contrast, Mahāyāna Buddhists are expected to strive to end not only their own suffering but also the suffering of all other beings. Compassion, placing the needs of others before one's own, lies at the very center of Tibetan religious rhetoric and self-conception. This compassionate orientation is embodied in the figure of the bodhisattva, spiritual heroes who have postponed their own enlightenment until all other beings have achieved an end to suffering. Most religious Tibetans—both monastic and lay—articulate their own adherence to this ideal by taking the bodhisattva vow. Like monastic vows, taking the bodhisattva vow is a highly ritualized process, though the details of the ritual and the precise wording of the vow differ from one lineage to the next. Whatever the specific formulation, however, those who take the bodhisattva vow are committing themselves to striving for the benefit of others in this and all future lives. Compassion, and the bodhisattva vow that articulates it, is the subject of this chapter.

It is not hard to see how the need to have, and display, compassion could lead toward vegetarianism. Tibetans, after all, lived among domestic animals, and the suffering animals undergo in the slaughtering process was obvious to all. And eating meat, many Tibetans acknowledged, was the direct cause of slaughtering. For devout Buddhists such as these, the only way to truly live up to the compassionate demands of the bodhisattva vow was to become vegetarian. This attitude is expressed in nearly all texts that discuss meat eating. As this pervasive concern for the incompatibility of meat and compassion suggests, it was the need to develop and practice compassion that was the driving force behind vegetarianism in Tibet.

Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism

Beings suffer in numerous ways. Bones are broken. Bodies age. Loved ones are lost. Moreover, Buddhism generally asserts that there is a persistent unsatisfactoriness that pervades normal, unenlightened life.[1] There is not space here, unfortunately, to pursue a full typology of Buddhist notions of suffering. Instead, we will have to be satisfied by noting that, for Tibetan thinkers, suffering is not simply equated with physical pain, or even with mental anguish. Instead it reflects the persistently unsatisfactory nature of life and is an experience shared by all beings, human and animal alike.

Different schools of Buddhist thought attribute suffering to different causes, though most Tibetans agree that, at its root, suffering is caused by a misapprehension of the true nature of the world. As the twentieth-century master Kangyur Rinpoché puts it, "[Suffering] is the product of ignorance."[2] Normal, non-enlightened beings perceive and understand things wrongly, and this error causes us to suffer. As such, the only permanent solution to suffering is to achieve enlightenment, the shift in mentality that liberates beings from suffering. In such a system, the only true way for someone who has taken the bodhisattva vow to alleviate the suffering of others is to enable them to traverse the Buddhist path and achieve liberation. In most cases, this means becoming a religious teacher. But before one can teach others, one must achieve some level of personal liberation. Many Tibetans, therefore, couch their personal religious practice in terms of the bodhisattva vow and the call to compassion. They study, meditate, and perform rituals not for their own benefit, but so that they can more effectively lead others to enlightenment.[3]

While suffering can only be fully alleviated by achieving enlightenment, this does not mean that Tibetans are unconcerned with more conventional, worldly forms of suffering. Everyone suffers, but Tibetan Buddhist thinkers also accept that some people suffer more than others. Obvious examples of this include those who are born poor or those who are ill or who have lost a loved one. Again, there is no need to construct a detailed typology of these forms of suffering. What is important to recognize at this point is that, in addition to the pervasive suffering that all beings experience, Tibetans also acknowledge acute forms of suffering such as physical pain and mental anguish. The conduct implied by the bodhisattva vow, therefore, is not limited to teaching religion, but also incorporates actions designed to alleviate specific, acute forms of suffering. This can be as little as giving money or food to a beggar, or it can mean more substantial actions, as when a ruler frees prisoners. All such actions can be (and are) interpreted as acts of compassion, encouraged, and perhaps even required by the bodhisattva vow.

Importantly for our discussion, Tibetans explicitly include animals as appropriate recipients of human compassion. There is a strong current in the Euro-American philosophical and theological tradition that suggests the animal and human spheres are fundamentally distinct. In his seminal article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," Lynn White has suggested that this view has its roots in the biblical book of Genesis, where God appoints Adam to be the namer and guardian of the animals.[4] Whatever its origin, this view was articulated by some of the most important figures of the Western tradition. Augustine, for instance, declared, in *De Moribus Manichaeorum*, "We see and perceive from their cries that animals die with pain. But of course man disregards this in a beast with which, because it has no rational soul, man is not linked by any community of law."[5] Augustine does not deny that animals appear to suffer, but, because humans (endowed with a soul) and animals (without) are fundamentally distinct, animal suffering is none of our business.

Perhaps more famously, Descartes described animals as no more than a machine, akin to those designed by humans. In a 1649 letter to Henry Moore, Descartes claims, "It seems reasonable since art copies nature, and men can make various automata which move without thought, that nature should produce its own automata much more splendid than the artificial ones. These natural automata are the animals."[6] For Descartes, animals were simply natural machines, moving without thought. The implications of such a view are drastic: animals feel no pain, have no emotions and do not suffer. Again, there is no reason for humans to concern themselves with animal welfare.[7]

No such view exists in Tibet. Like Buddhists elsewhere, Tibetan thinkers assume that both animals and humans are part of samsara, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that characterizes life as we know it. Rather than having fundamentally different natures, humans and animals share a basic identity as sentient beings. *Semchen*, the Tibetan term frequently translated as "sentient being," but which literally means "possessing a mind," refers to all beings in samsara, and explicitly places both humans and animals into the same category (along with ghosts, gods, and demons). Humans, animals, and spirits are all, on a basic level, the same type of creature.

Because of this, it is quite possible for a human being to be reborn as an animal, or an animal to be reborn as a human. All it takes is the appropriate karma. Further, since time is generally (though not always) understood to be literally beginningless, we have all had an infinite number of rebirths, as an infinite variety of life-forms. One of the consequences of this is the idea that every being was, at some point in the distant past, related to every other being. Any being you meet, whether human, animal, or otherwise, was once your mother, caring for and raising you. This idea, that all beings were once your mother, is widespread in Tibet. It is so well known, in fact, that it appears in the titles of texts, such as Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé's *Letter on the Unsuitability of Eating the Meat of Our Past Mothers*.[8]

The idea that humans and animals share a fundamental identity did not mean that humans and animals were considered to be morally equivalent. Following long-standing Buddhist tradition, Tibetans generally assumed that animals were less intelligent than humans, and being born as an animal was considered a negative birth. Given their (assumed) stupidity, animals were unlikely to make progress toward enlightenment, and so remained trapped in the sufferings of samsara. Being born as a human, on the other hand, uniquely afforded the ability to practice Buddhism, making it the most precious of all births. Human life, in this view, was distinct from (and more valuable than) animal life. Still, these are distinctions of degree rather than of kind. Despite their differences, humans and animals both share an ability to think, to experience emotions, and to suffer.

It is the fact that animals experience suffering in ways that are familiar to us that makes them appropriate objects of compassion. Most Tibetans lived and worked in close proximity to domestic animals, and they were well aware of the suffering entailed in life as an animal. Kangyur Rinpoché makes this point clearly in his commentary to Jigmé Lingpa's *Treasury of Precious Qualities*:

> Domesticated animals are dependent on humans. Thanks to their servitude, they are tamed with a bridle, bit and nose rope. Their masters tether them, ride them and load them with burdens. They are herded and castrated. Their hair is sheared and they are bled while still alive. Because of suffering in these ways, their misfortune is great![9]

On top of these daily sufferings, domesticated animals were subject to the pain of untimely death. Like humans, animals were believed to love life and be instinctually afraid of death. Patrül Rinpoché makes this point during a discussion of wearing cloaks lined with lambskin: "As for lambskins: as soon

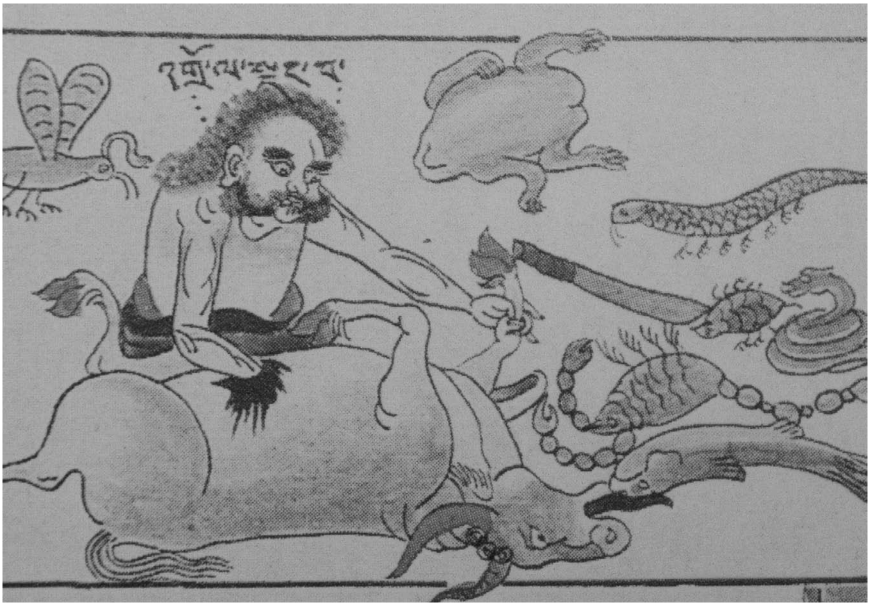


FIGURE 3.1 Painting of a butcher, from a copy of a seventeenth-century medical painting. Yuri Parfionovitch, Fernand Meyer, and Gyurmé Dorje, eds., *Tibetan Medical Paintings: Illustrations to the Blue Beryl Treatise of Sangye Gyamtso (1653–1705)*, 2 vols. (London: Serinda, 1992), 1:58. Used with permission.

as a lamb is born, its senses are complete. It can feel comfort and discomfort. But it is immediately killed, just as it first begins to enjoy life. It may be only a stupid animal, but it is afraid of dying. It loves life, but experiences the pain of dying."[10]

Tibetan slaughtering practices compounded the pain and fear inherent in dying. When an animal is killed for meat, Tibetans often try to conserve the blood, either for use in sausages or because richer, blood-filled meat is believed to be more delicious. The anthropologists Melvyn Goldstein and Cynthia Beall report that, at their field site in northwestern Tibet's Changtang Plateau, nomads often slaughtered yaks by carefully inserting a sword through the animal's chest and into its heart.[11] Done skillfully, this preserved the animal's blood, but it also meant that the animal could take ten minutes or more to die. During my own fieldwork in the eastern region of Kham, many villagers and nomads reported that they slaughtered their animals by tying a string around their muzzle, essentially suffocating the animal. Again, this method preserves the blood in an animal's tissue, but it also leads to a dying process lasting fifteen minutes or more.

Prolonging the death process means prolonging the animal's fear and suffering, so it is not surprising that some Tibetan authors felt a need to curb such practices. Shabkar, for one, singles out binding an animal's muzzle as a particularly heinous form of slaughtering, threatening all those involved: "In the autumn, goats, sheep and yaks are thrown on the ground and killed by closing their mouths and noses. If it is performed in this way, the one who kills the goats and sheep, the chieftain who commands 'kill!' and all those who consume its products will, in the future, be born in hell, where they will suffer for a long time."[12] As already seen, Shabkar was a reliably adamant vegetarian. Here, however, he expresses particular scorn for those who not only eat slaughtered meat, but who also subject animals to extended and unnecessary pain and fear.

Even if animals could be killed without any immediate pain or fear, they would still have to undergo the death process itself. Like other forms of Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism assumes the existence of past and future lives, and the transition from one life to the next is believed to be highly traumatic. The process is described most famously in the *Liberation Upon Hearing in the Intermediate State*, more popularly known in English as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. This text describes the death process in intricate detail, beginning with the forced separation from everything the dying individual knows and loves, then continuing with a series of horrific visions that persist for an extended intermediate period before the individual finally assumes a new body. Traumatic under the most peaceful circumstances, the death process becomes even worse when a being dies a violent or untimely death. In such circumstances, the traumatic emotions of the death experience compound the inherent trauma of dying, increasing the suffering of the intermediate period and ultimately leading to an inferior birth.[13]

Such theoretical claims are supported by the recollection of individuals who claim to have returned from the dead, and, therefore, to have experienced the dying process. Analyzing several biographies of such individuals, Brian Cuevas notes that, "first and foremost, the death experience is described as extremely frightening and physically unpleasant."[14] Death, in Tibetan conceptions, is not a process of quietly slipping from one body to another, but a horrific and confusing barrage of sense stimuli. Death, for both humans and animals, is, in a word, suffering.

All of these attitudes, the reality of animal emotions, their lack of intelligence, and the suffering of untimely death are beautifully encapsulated in a single quote from the *Autobiography* of the eighteenth-century master Jigmé Lingpa. The quote is long, but it is worth presenting in full:

> Having now become animals, your fathers, mothers, siblings and friends from previous lives tremble with fear in the butcher's sinful hands, tears streaming from their eyes, and panting for breath. In that state they wonder what to do. Alas, there is no refuge! There is nowhere to go! Thinking that, right now in this place, they may be killed, their urgent suffering is great. In such a state, like one approaching a terrifying pit of hell-fire, their body is turned upside down, the muzzle is tied up, and their eyes move wildly with lights shining forth. What they see is their stomach being opened up. With their feet perpendicular, they are set on the path to the next life without even a quiver.[15]

Jigmé Lingpa's thoughts serve as a convenient coda to this discussion of animal suffering. In the past, the animal was our friend and relative, showing us kindness. Now it trembles with fear, undergoing all the doubt and pain that accompany death. All because humans desire meat to eat.

In the previous chapter, I focused on the relationship between vegetarianism and the monastic code, noting that while the rule of threefold purity explicitly allows monks to eat meat, many Tibetans felt that this rule did not apply in Tibet. In the present context, where the issue is one of compassion, the arguments do not involve a legalistic parsing of Vinaya rules and regulations, but rather an appeal to the reader's emotions and the equivalency of human and animal suffering. We have already seen this in the vivid, emotional language used in the above quote from Jigmé Lingpa. Patrül Rinpoché is even more explicit in his desire for people to identify with animal suffering. His *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* asks readers to reflect on the suffering animals experience: "Think of an individual animal, such as a sheep or a yak, that is about to be slaughtered. As it is taken from the flock, it experiences inconceivable terror." After enumerating, at length, all the suffering the animal experiences, Patrül concludes, "Anyone who can eat such things is a real cannibal."[16] By invoking the specter of cannibalism, Patrül blurs the distinction between human and nonhuman flesh. This is not an appeal to a specific doctrine or set of rules, but an encouragement to engage emotionally with the death of an animal.

Nor was this emphasis on an emotional engagement with animal suffering limited to religious advice literature. Biographies of Tibetan vegetarians repeatedly mention a moment at which the reality of animal suffering hit home, prompting the individual to become vegetarian. There are many examples of this, but one of the clearest can be found in Shabkar's *Autobiography*:

> As I was walking on the outer pilgrimage circuit, I saw many goats and sheep that had been slaughtered by butchers. This caused me to experience unbearable compassion for all beings killed for food. So I went back before the Jowo statue, performed prostrations and vowed, "From now on I will abandon meat, the sinful food that is the flesh of my mothers and fathers."[17]

In Shabkar's recollection, his vegetarianism was prompted not by a long period of philosophical reflection, but by the observation of sheep that had been slaughtered. This is not to suggest that it was an entirely unexpected decision; Shabkar was (at least according to his later autobiographical reflections) concerned with the welfare of animals from an early age. It is instructive, however, that the event that finally leads him to adopt vegetarianism was a moment of compassion for the suffering experienced by slaughtered animals. Animal suffering was not just an abstract reflection, it could (and did) have a direct impact on human conduct.

Simply recognizing and sympathizing with animal suffering, however, is not the same as adopting a vegetarian diet. The key move in this argument is, once again, to connect eating meat with the slaughter of the animal and the suffering it causes. I have already discussed this connection in the previous chapter, where it was the key to arguing that eating meat violated the monastic rule against killing. There is no need, therefore, to repeat the details of this argument, and it will suffice to note that many Tibetans made an economic connection between those who bought meat and those who killed animals in order to produce it. As Shabkar says, "The root cause of slaughtering is eating meat."[18] Because eating meat caused others to kill, Tibetan authors felt they could legitimately claim that vegetarianism led to reducing the animal suffering in the world.

As this section has demonstrated, Tibetans were well aware that animals suffered intensely during the slaughtering process. Further, many accepted that eating meat was the necessary precondition for animals to be slaughtered. Because of this, and because the bodhisattva vow asks practitioners to actively seek to alleviate suffering in the world, many Tibetans felt they had a moral and religious obligation to do what they could to reduce the slaughter of animals for food. Adopting vegetarianism was one way to do so.

Karmic Repercussions

Like Buddhists elsewhere, religious Tibetans generally assume that the world functions according to the law of karma. Performing a positive action, they believe, leads an individual to experience a positive result. Likewise, negative actions lead to negative results. Sometimes those results ripen during a single lifetime, such as when a murderer is executed. Often, however, the results of actions are not experienced until some time in the indefinite future, perhaps in the next life but perhaps not for many lifetimes. For this reason, if someone wants to have a good rebirth, they need to cultivate positive conduct and reject negative conduct. Concern for a positive rebirth, however, is not only about benefiting oneself. In order to alleviate the suffering of others (either religious or worldly), an individual needs to be in a position to actually do something. Tibetans assert six possible realms of birth, including the realms of gods, demigods, humans, animals, ghosts, and various types of hell. Only some realms allow an individual to work to benefit others. Someone born in hell, after all, cannot do much to help others. Therefore, for many Tibetan thinkers, acquiring a good rebirth carries with it the potential to help both oneself and others.

Given that killing was widely seen as causing intense suffering, it is not surprising that killing is believed to be among the worst possible actions, and those who kill are widely believed to be bound for hell. Killing a human was particularly heinous, but killing animals also leads to negative rebirths. There is a special hell, in fact, for those who kill animals. As Kangyur Rinpoché explains, citing the canonical *Sūtra of Close Mindfulness*,[19] "In the Crushing Hell beings are smashed between stone mountains shaped like the heads of beings they have previously killed."[20] Karmic consequences are said to be similar to their causes, so that a killer is killed in turn. This lends a certain poetic justice to depictions of the Crushing Hell, where those who killed animals are now killed in turn (figure 3.2).

Not all killing, however, results in a birth in hell. In order for any act to produce its full karmic repercussions, it needs to be complete, meaning that it includes both an intention to perform the action and an accurate awareness of what is happening. Jigmé Lingpa explains this point in his *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, "[Killing] only occurs when one intentionally takes the

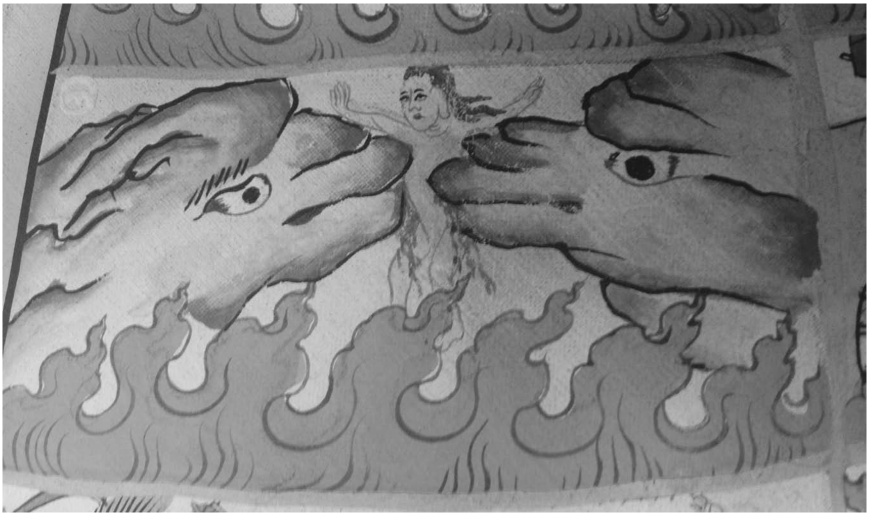


FIGURE 3.2 Mural painting of the Crushing Hell from a contemporary monastery in eastern Tibet. Photo by the author.

life of someone correctly understood to be alive."[21] Accidentally stepping on a bug is not the same as knowing there is a bug in front of you and intentionally crushing it. Only the latter reaps the full karmic result.

We have already seen several Tibetan authors make an explicit link between eating meat and killing an animal. It is not surprising, therefore, that pro-vegetarian thinkers routinely threaten meat eaters with hell. Such threats, in fact, appear in almost all significant discussions of meat eating. Sometimes these claims are brief, as when Nyamé Sherab Gyeltsen claims that "the negative result of [meat eating] is to be born as a hawk, a wolf, a ghost or a hungry ghost. Ultimately, one will be born in hell."[22] Other authors dwelt on this point at length and with literary flourish. The prominent mid-nineteenth-century mantrin Nyakla Pema Düdül, for instance, structures his *Song of Advice for Giving Up Meat* around a dream sequence in which the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara gives Nyakla Pema Düdül a vivid tour of the hells that await meat eaters. The vision is so terrifying that Nyakla Pema Düdül resolves, as soon as he awakes, to renounce all meat.[23] Yönten Gyatso offers a similar depiction of the hell where meat eaters will be reborn. "Now that you are in the karmic courts," he warns meat eaters, "look to see if you will be happy or sad, you devourers of gifts! You will be born repeatedly in a prison [made of] the meat and blood of your mother. Your own flesh will be eaten, just as you ate the flesh of others."[24]

For such threats to be effective, however, readers had to be convinced that eating meat was the equivalent of a complete act of killing, with both an accurate awareness of the situation and the intention to kill. Perhaps the most thorough treatment of this comes from Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen's *Faults of Meat*:

> As another example, take the killing of a yak. First, one thinks, "If I kill this yak, there will be lots of meat." This is the ground element, the knowledge that the object to be killed is a yak. Then, thinking, "Those yaks are a herd of wealth," either you or someone else strings a rope around the animal's neck. This is the intention element, the thought to kill the yak. Continuing from this, the yak is lead into the butcher's corral, its limbs are bound, it is turned upside down, and its muzzle is wrapped with cord. This is the application element, when the actual killing is done. Then the yak's breath is cut off and its mind is severed from its body. When its eyes bulge and its life-force has been completely destroyed, this is the completion element.[25]

Importantly, Shardza argues that killing this yak is complete regardless of whether "you or someone else" actually wields the knife. For Shardza, who notes repeatedly that butchers only do their work because people buy meat, everyone in the economy of meat carries the karma of a complete act of killing.

Other Tibetans, of course, did not understand eating meat in this way at all. Khedrup Jé, for instance, argues that eating meat is karmically distinct from the actual act of killing, pointing particularly to the different intention held by the consumer and the butcher.

> Those who suggest that [meat eaters] have the same karma as the killer himself are denying the karmic effects of actions. A "karmically complete action" is when someone deliberately and unmistakenly kills another being. This is karma with a definite result. And, just as if you mistakenly throw a stone that hits someone in the head and kills them, although you join with the butcher, the motivation is incomplete. Generally, the sūtras and treatises call this an "incomplete action" that does not have a definite result. The killer's intention does not arise, and one does not in any way perform the action of a killer. Merely eating meat that one has bought in the market does not result in the same fruition as ripens on the killer himself.[26]

It is worth noting that Khedrup Jé does not suggest that meat eating is karmically positive, or even neutral. Instead, he limits himself to insisting that eating meat that one has purchased is distinct from actually killing the animal.

But Tibetans' karmic relationships with animals are not always negative. While eating meat could send you to hell, saving or prolonging animals' lives is also a powerful way to generate positive karma. Tibetans have, in fact, ritualized the saving of animals through the practice of *tsetar*, or life ransoming. During the ransoming ritual, an individual buys an animal that is otherwise destined for slaughter and then frees it, allowing it to live out its life free from fear. The ritual often includes a religious leader saying prayers for the benefit of the animal. Ransoming rituals are performed for a variety of animals, including domestic animals such as yaks, sheep, and goats, but also wild animals such as fish, birds, and deer. While wild animals are usually released directly into the environment, domestic animals are frequently kept with the herds, marked with red wool tassels to show their ransomed status.[27]

Ransoming the lives of animals is widely believed to produce strong, positive karma. In particular, since the ritual lengthens an animal's life, it is said to be particularly useful for extending the life of someone whose life is in danger. Tibetan biographies routinely recall instances when life ransoming was performed for the sake of a religious leader who was ill. In some cases, these rituals involved huge numbers of animals, as when Khenpo Ngakchung's disciples are said to have ransomed thirty-one thousand animals in a (successful) attempt to lengthen his life.[28]

It is important to distinguish ransoming animals from vegetarianism. Ransoming was often performed as a one-time ritual, distinct from the ongoing commitment that characterizes vegetarianism. Further, it is quite clear that many of those who practiced life ransoming were not vegetarian. Khenpo Ngakchung, for one, was happy to have ransoming rituals performed on his behalf, but there is no suggestion he ever became vegetarian.[29] Some authors, however, took the basic idea that justifies life ransoming—that saving an animal's life lengthens one's own—and applied it to vegetarianism as well. Shabkar, for instance, argued that "there is great benefit for those able to abandon meat. Good spirits assemble like clouds, always guarding and protecting. After a long, healthy life with a joyous body and mind, [vegetarians] are born as either a god or a human."[30] Like *tsetar*, vegetarianism extends the lives of animals. As such, its karmic result is to guard and extend the lives of its practitioners.

Soteriological Benefits

Vegetarianism, according to these authors, prevented accumulating the negative karma of meat eating while also accruing the positive karma of saving animals' lives. In addition to such karmic benefits, however, some authors argued that vegetarianism, and compassion toward animals more generally, could produce direct soteriological benefit. Approached in the right way, vegetarianism could help lead to higher mental states and, eventually, liberation itself. This is possible because compassion is more than simply a necessary precondition of religious progress. In many interpretations, compassion is equated with enlightenment itself. We have already seen that Tibetan Buddhists, in line with Mahāyāna Buddhism more broadly, argue that practitioners should put the needs of others before their own. Buddhas and bodhisattvas, as ideal practitioners, think and act exclusively for the benefit of others. Compassion, in other words, is the very nature of enlightened activity. Cultivating compassion, therefore, is a way to cultivate the enlightened state itself, and practitioners sought diligently to experience states of pure compassion.

Focusing on the suffering of animals was one way to generate and cultivate this compassion. Examples of this can be found in numerous Tibetan biographies, but the most striking comes from the *Autobiography* of Jigmé Lingpa. Early on in this text, Jigmé Lingpa recalls seeing a group of lambs lined up awaiting slaughter:

> The killing of these beings reminded me of the actions of great dogs. Seeing and hearing it caused me great suffering. I wanted to immediately liberate these beings from their suffering and wished that I had a safe house to protect them. Horrific activities such as these occurred here, merely because it was the season for slaughtering animals. Thinking like this, uncontrived compassion arose. Until that day, even though I had recited the words of the mind-training of the four immeasurables hundreds of thousands of times, I had never had true, uncontrived compassion of that strength. This experience was the most important event of my life.[31]

This is a remarkable passage, one of the most striking events in a text that is itself one of the greatest examples of Tibetan autobiography. Jigmé Lingpa describes his experience here as one of uncontrived compassion, the spontaneous compassion that is a hallmark of the enlightenment experience. Further, this experience was more profound than any he had experienced previously, despite hundreds of thousands of repetitions of more conventional practices. It was, he concludes, the most important event of his life. All based on the sight of lambs awaiting slaughter.

Jigmé Lingpa also codified this idea in his religious advice manuals. In his *Engaging the Path of Enlightenment*, for instance, Jigmé Lingpa advises students to think that the animal whose meat they are about to eat was once their kind parent and should be treated with kindness in return. “If you are a normal minded person and you think about this,” he concludes, “then your heart will break, and you will necessarily develop compassion towards the animal. Then, even if you can't develop perfect compassion, something similar will definitely arise."[32] For Jigmé Lingpa, the experience of compassion provoked by animal suffering was not simply a one-time, spontaneous event; it was something that could be cultivated.

But what of vegetarianism? As I have argued elsewhere, it is unclear if Jigmé Lingpa himself was a vegetarian, despite his obvious love of animals and the many positive things he had to say about a vegetarian diet.[33] Other lamas, however, were quite clear that adopting vegetarianism was not only a reflection of preexisting compassion, but could also cause a practitioner's compassion to increase. The nineteenth-century master Nyakla Pema Düdül, for one, argues that, "if you renounce [meat], . . . then the causes of kindness and compassion will arise spontaneously."[34] Shabkar makes a similar point in the second volume of his *Autobiography*. Here, one of Shabkar's students asks him why he is so insistent that his followers should not eat meat. He responds, in part, by arguing that "the state of omniscience arises from the mind of enlightenment. This, in turn, is rooted in compassion. And craving for meat is the factor that impedes the growth of great compassion in one's mind. Therefore, if one can eliminate meat, many doors to misdeeds will be destroyed and you will develop the ability to benefit the teachings and beings, either directly or indirectly."[35] For Shabkar, eating meat was an obstacle to compassion. Vegetarianism, therefore, was a proactive religious practice, supporting and cultivating the development of compassion.

Reconciling the Three Vows

The discussion in this chapter is focused on the bodhisattva vow, which articulates the compassionate orientation expected of Mahāyāna practitioners. Most of the time, this orientation aligns smoothly with the vows of individual liberation discussed in the previous chapter. In some situations, however, these vows contradict each other. The bodhisattva vow, after all, is based on an intention—to benefit others—and there are times when that intention contradicts the strict requirements of the Vinaya. In order to give money to a beggar, for instance, a monk would need to physically handle cash, a violation of the monastic code. To deal with such contradictions between the vows, Tibetan authors developed various theories delineating the relationships among the vows of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vow, and the tantric commitments.

The literature associated with these three-vow theories (known as *domsum* in Tibetan) seeks to establish the circumstances under which a particular set of vows should be applied. For a few thinkers, each successive set of vows subsumed and transformed the previous set. Thus, when an individual took the bodhisattva vow, they were no longer subject to the vows of individual liberation.[36] More commonly, many Tibetans felt that while higher vows did not actually subsume lower vows, they did supersede them. In this interpretation, someone with the bodhisattva vow is still subject to the vows of individual liberation under normal circumstances. If a situation arises when the vows contradict themselves, however, this person should follow the higher vows.[37]

Meat eating was one such circumstance. In the previous chapter, I showed how the rule of threefold purity was generally interpreted to allow monks and nuns to eat meat. There were extensive debates about how this rule should be understood and applied, and many felt that the standard interpretation found in Tibet—that threefold purity allowed monks to eat meat in normal, everyday circumstances—was too lenient. Few of these authors, however, were willing to come out and directly reject the rule of threefold purity itself, accepting that under the right circumstances monks and nuns could eat meat without violating their vows.

If the vows of individual liberation allow eating meat under certain circumstances, most commenters agree that meat is clearly out of step with the bodhisattva vow. Slaughtering an animal for meat caused it to suffer, contradicting the compassionate orientation demanded by Mahāyāna Buddhism. Thus, authors who supported vegetarianism were left with something of a contradiction: meat was at least nominally permitted by the vows of individual liberation, but forbidden by the bodhisattva vow.

Tibetan thinkers resolved this tension by invoking three-vow theory. Perhaps the clearest and most influential example of this comes from Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows*. As discussed in the previous chapter, Sakya Paṇḍita admits that meat is allowed for those who adhere only to the vows of individual liberation: "Listeners may eat meat that has threefold purity. To refuse would be the conduct of Devadatta."[38] Not only is meat allowed for these non-Mahāyāna practitioners, vegetarianism is actually forbidden. Immediately after this passage, however, Sakya Paṇḍita argues that, “in the Mahāyāna, meat is forbidden. Eating meat, it is taught, causes rebirth in the lower realms.”[39] By this point in his text, Sakya Paṇḍita has already made clear that, in cases of conflict, the bodhisattva vow outranks the vows of individual liberation. Readers are left to conclude, therefore, that meat is unacceptable for those who have taken the bodhisattva vow, despite the rule of threefold purity.

Sakya Paṇḍita’s *Distinguishing the Three Vows* is one of the most influential texts in the three-vow genre, and later authors routinely cite his take on meat eating. Gorampa Sönam Sengé, for one, wrote an extensive commentary on Sakya Paṇḍita’s work, including no less than six pages on meat. Much of this work is devoted to interpreting the place of meat in the vows of individual liberation, but in the end Gorampa admits this discussion is moot, since “in the Mahāyāna, the first point is that meat is forbidden, whether it has threefold purity or not. Eating it is a cause of being born in hell.”[40] Other authors did not cite Sakya Paṇḍita directly, but came to similar conclusions nonetheless. Dolpopa Sherab Gyeltsen, for one, accepts that, “in the context of the Listeners’s practice, meat that was offered for sale in the market, and not killed for your own sake, is allowed.”[41] When he turns his attention to the Mahāyāna path, however, Dolpopa is clear that meat is no longer allowed, “In the context of the Bodhisattva’s practice, meat is completely forbidden.”[42] Across the board, in fact, most texts that dwell on meat eating at any length agree that the bodhisattva vow supersedes the vows of individual liberation, effectively rendering any permission granted by the latter moot.

The supremacy of the bodhisattva vow over the vows of individual liberation requires us to reevaluate some of the debates featured in the previous chapter. There, I addressed the place of meat in Vinaya regulations, noting that the rules for monks and nuns explicitly allow meat with threefold purity to be consumed. The applicability of this rule in a Tibetan context was questioned, but not the rule itself. Only a few of the relevant texts were standalone treatises on the Vinaya, however. More commonly, these discussions of monastic vegetarianism were contained within works reflecting on religious ethics more broadly. As such, these reflections on monastic meat eating were often framed by discussions of compassion and animal suffering. These works, it often seems, are not really concerned with interrogating the position of meat in the Vinaya for its own sake. Instead, these authors often seem to be much more concerned with reconciling the permission to eat meat found in the vows of individual liberation with the compassionate perspective of the bodhisattva vow. Compassion, the authors assume, is the fundamental basis for Buddhist practice. Allowing monks to eat meat, even under restricted circumstances, seems to have struck them as out of step with such a compassionate orientation.

At this point, it is worth recalling that many Tibetans asserted that the rule of threefold purity was only provisional, propounded so that beginners would not be scared away from the Buddhist path, but to be abandoned as soon as an individual began to progress. As Gorampa claims, "My own conception is that the Vinaya allows meat to beginners as a basic precept while they are preparing for [higher] stages. Later, having perfected the fundamental precepts and having studied the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, meat is forbidden, even to Listeners."[43] As a good Buddhist, Gorampa seems reluctant to entirely reject the rule of threefold purity, which he admits was propounded by the Buddha himself. He does not feel entirely comfortable with this rule, however, which strikes him as out of sync with the basic compassion expected of a Buddhist. On this point, at least, his analysis of the Vinaya seems less like an attempt to understand the vows of individual liberation in their own right and more like a quest to make sense of a rule that feels out of step with the fundamental call to have compassion for all beings.

Vegetarianism Beyond the Monastery

Most vegetarians in Tibet were monastics. As discussed in the last chapter, vegetarianism, despite not being required by the Vinaya, fit well with the broader ethos of renunciation that characterized monasticism. This association between vegetarianism and monasticism, however, was not universal. Drawing on the compassionate ideal embodied by the bodhisattva vow, some Tibetan mantrins also made the decision to forgo meat.

We have already met Tibet's community of mantrins, so called because of their adherence to tantric mantras. Like monks, mantrins were professional religious practitioners, regularly called on to perform both public and private rituals. Unlike monks, however, mantrins were allowed, and even expected, to get married and have children. They were also permitted, and again, sometimes expected, to consume alcohol. Overall, while mantrins were expected to be dedicated practitioners, they were excused from the renunciatory regimen that characterized monastic life. We might also expect that this would excuse mantrins from any expectation of vegetarianism, and this does seem to have been the case in some times and places. In this regard we may again recall Orgyen Lingpa's *Chronicle of Padma*, in which meat and alcohol are forbidden for monks, but mantrins can, "eat whatever they like."[44] In accordance with this passage, most mantrins in Tibet seem to have been quite willing to eat meat.

Some mantrins, however, drawing on discourses surrounding compassion, did decide to forgo meat. While the broader Tibetan vegetarian movement was widespread across space and time, the available evidence suggests that vegetarianism in the mantrin community was more restricted, prevalent only in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There were isolated mantrin vegetarians at other times and in other places, but this seems to have been the only time when such a diet became widespread in the mantrin community.

It is always difficult to locate the genesis of a particular movement, but in this case I can confidently claim that the rise of non-monastic vegetarianism is rooted in the teachings and writings of Jigmé Lingpa. Jigmé Lingpa may or may not have been a vegetarian himself, but he consistently critiqued eating meat and promoted concern for animal suffering. Further, while Jigmé Lingpa took ordination early in his life, and his writings reveal a nuanced awareness of the Vinaya, he spent most of his career living as a mantrin. Perhaps because of his non-monastic status, Jigmé Lingpa's writings on meat largely forgo detailed analysis of Vinaya regulations in favor of vivid descriptions of animal suffering, seemingly intended to awaken compassion in his readers.

Jigmé Lingpa flourished in the mid- to late eighteenth century, and while he never travelled to Kham personally, his teachings became popular there within his own lifetime. In particular, textual evidence suggests that his student Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu played an important role in transmitting Jigmé Lingpa's ideas about animals and meat eating to Kham. Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu was himself a dedicated vegetarian and actively taught that eating meat was sinful, using vivid descriptions reminiscent of Jigmé Lingpa's own writings.[45] This emphasis on generating a compassionate response in readers extended to other mantrins in Kham as well. Roughly a generation later, for instance, Nyakla Pema Düdül recalls a dream encounter with Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Avalokiteśvara criticizes Nyakla Pema Düdül, asking, “Are you actually kind and compassionate? It is not suitable for someone who cultivates compassion to eat meat!”[46] Once again, this text is striking for its vivid portrayal of animals’ suffering and its almost complete lack of attention to Vinaya issues.

In addition to these figures, all of whom belong to the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, vegetarianism was also practiced by Bön mantrins in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Kham. As mentioned in the first chapter of this book, the late twentieth-century Bön mantrin Jampel Pawo Dorjé Tsal’s *History of the Makser Bön Lineage* recalls several vegetarian mantrins active during the early twentieth century.[47] By the early twentieth century, it seems, vegetarianism had spread to both Nyingma and Bön mantrin communities. While this emphasis on vegetarianism among mantrins seems to have been unusual in Tibetan religious history, it highlights the importance of compassion in discussions of vegetarianism. For these figures, after all, the intricacies of the monastic code were irrelevant. Instead, their vegetarianism was grounded entirely in an interpretation of the bodhisattva vow and its call to compassion, a position reflected in the content of their texts, which emphasize emotional engagement with animal suffering rather than legalistic parsing of the Vinaya.

Conclusion

For many Tibetans, compassion lies at the heart of Buddhist practice. Compassion, particularly as it is formulated in the bodhisattva vow, orients religious practice toward a specific goal: relieving the suffering of others. Further, animals are explicitly included as appropriate recipients of human compassion. This compassionate orientation has, for almost a millennium, been the driving force behind the adoption and spread of vegetarianism in Tibet. In the previous chapter, I showed that there was considerable debate in Tibet over whether or not meat was allowed under the monastic vows. For many Tibetan religious leaders, however, this debate was moot. Even if meat was allowed according to the vows of individual liberation, it was forbidden by the bodhisattva vow. And the bodhisattva vow, according to standard three-vow theory, superseded the vows of individual liberation. Meat, therefore, was forbidden to devout Buddhists, regardless of their ordination status.

If the bodhisattva vow superseded the vows of individual liberation, however, it was in turn superseded by the tantric commitments, the third and highest set of vows observed by Tibetan Buddhists. And while these tantric commitments continue to emphasize compassion, they also introduce a variety of practices that complicate the place of meat in Tibetan religiosity. These tantric commitments are the subject of the next chapter.

FOUR

Tantric Perspectives

OVER THE LAST TWO CHAPTERS, I have explored the place of meat according to the perspective of the vows of individual liberation and the bodhisattva vow. Now I will take an esoteric turn, looking at the religious role of meat according to the vows taken by tantric practitioners. In many ways, the tantric perspective echoes that of a bodhisattva: compassion remains the highest motivation, and practitioners are still expected to place the needs of others above their own. While this intention remains the same, however, many tantric practices differ dramatically from those of more conventional forms of Buddhism.

Among these esoteric practices are some that mandate the consumption of meat. This mandate is enshrined in the vows tantric practitioners take and is widely acknowledged by Tibetan authorities, including many who otherwise promote vegetarianism. While most authors acknowledge that their vows require them to eat meat, they disagree over the scope of this necessity. For some, the tantric vow to eat meat granted license to consume flesh on a normal, daily basis. For those concerned over the role of meat in perpetuating animal suffering, on the other hand, tantric vows were interpreted to require only a small amount of actual meat, consumed only during particular ritual settings. In this interpretation, widespread among those authors surveyed for this book, the tantric requirement to eat meat did not conflict with maintaining and promoting a primarily vegetarian diet. While the tantras certainly complicated the debates over vegetarianism, they did not fundamentally alter the view of those who saw meat as incompatible with the compassionate attitude required by Buddhism.

Tantra in Tibet

Tantric Buddhism is notoriously difficult to define. Before exploring the role of meat in Tibetan tantrism, therefore, a little background may be in order. As a religious movement—if we may call it that—tantra arose in India during the second half of the first millennium C.E. Adherents, both Hindu and Buddhist, promulgated new scriptures, known as tantras. Buddhist tantric practitioners claimed that these texts, like the traditional sutras, were spoken by a buddha, though not necessarily by the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. These texts, therefore, were understood by almost all Tibetans as canonical. This point is reflected in the fact that the tantras were included in the *Kagyur*, the same scriptural compilation that also contains the more familiar corpus of sutras.

Most Tibetan exegetes accepted that the philosophical vision contained in these tantras is identical (or at least very similar) to the vision contained in the Mahāyāna sutras.[1] Instead, the tantras' true distinctiveness lies in the practices they promote. As Jamgön Kongtrül explains in his encyclopedic *Treasury of Knowledge*, "What is the difference between the sutric and tantric vehicles? Their ultimate goal is identical: enlightenment that does not abide in dualistic extremes. But tantra's methods—meditating on deities, reciting mantras and so on: all those methods that are possible after one has received tantric empowerment—are unobscured."[2] Because they are unobscured, tantric practices are swift and effective, enabling a practitioner to quickly reach enlightenment. Kongtrül notes that conventional Mahāyāna practice can take several incalculable eons to reach enlightenment. The tantric path, on the other hand, is swift, so that "a practitioner can achieve enlightenment in one to seven lifetimes."[3] As discussed in the previous chapter, the Mahāyāna path is believed to be superior to the Hīnayāna because its goal—enlightenment for all—is superior. Tantric Buddhism also seeks enlightenment for all, however, and so cannot be distinguished on that basis. Instead, Kongtrül places the tantric path at the pinnacle of Buddhism because its practices are so powerful that enlightenment can be achieved in a relatively short period of time.

Profound as they may be, tantric practices are also quite diverse. Some tantras contain elaborate descriptions of deities, their palaces and their retinues, asking practitioners to visualize themselves as part of that scene, either among the retinue or as the central deity him or herself. Others ask practitioners to manipulate the subtle body—bodily energies and the channels that energy flows through—in order to produce mental and physical effects. Many tantras also promote the recitation of mantras, short Sanskrit phrases that encapsulate and express the underlying reality of a particular deity. Mantras are such an integral part of tantric practice that many Tibetans refer to the tantric path as Mantrayāna, the vehicle of mantra. Further, there are many competing cycles of tantric practices, each of which is complete with its own tantras, commentaries, practice materials, and artistic traditions. The details of these divisions are beyond the scope of this project, but one important distinction is relevant to our discussion: the difference between Nyingma and Sarma traditions. The Nyingma, literally meaning the "old ones," adhere to a collection of tantras translated in the eighth and ninth centuries, during the Tibetan Imperial Period. The Sarma, literally "new ones," rely on texts translated primarily between the eleventh and thirteenth century.

Before actually engaging in tantric practice, most tantras require an individual to receive a ritual initiation or empowerment. As part of this ritual, participants agree to abide by a set of vows, known as tantric commitments (*samaya* in Sanskrit). Not surprisingly, different tantric cycles enumerate these vows differently. Many Nyingma cycles, for instance, enumerate a system of three root and twenty-five branch commitments. Sarma cycles, on the other hand, often espouse a system of fourteen commitments.[4] Whatever enumeration is being promoted, however, practitioners are expected to do their best to abide by these commitments, just as they are expected to abide by the vows of individual liberation and the bodhisattva vow.

A Tantric Sacrament

Importantly for our discussion here, most enumerations of the tantric commitments include a vow to eat meat. More specifically, practitioners vow to eat the five meats. The Indian master Puṇḍarīka gives a clear enumeration of these five in *Stainless Light*, his seminal commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra*, probably composed in 1012.[5] "The five meats," he explains, "are cow, dog, elephant, horse and human."[6] References to the five meats are included in both Nyingma and Sarma tantric cycles, and while the list can vary in its details, the overall themes remain consistent: human flesh is always included, as well as cow. These meats are, obviously, not the types of meat that people eat every day. They are, in fact, precisely the opposite of normal, socially acceptable meat, and their consumption violates strong dietary taboos. Human flesh, after all, was never considered acceptable in either India or Tibet. Beef is similarly taboo in India, where the cow has been venerated for millennia.[7] For their part, dog, elephant, and horse are all considered powerfully unclean and polluting. By vowing to eat these meats, therefore, an individual commits to directly violating the social norms of their society.[8]

Such commitments are part of a broader antinomian streak found in many—though by no means all—tantric cycles. In addition to eating these five meats, many tantras demand that practitioners commit acts that are opposed to normative Buddhist practice. Most enumerations of tantric commitments in the Nyingma tradition, for instance, ask practitioners to *cultivate* the five poisons: desire, anger, ignorance, pride, and jealousy.[9] Sarma commitments carry a similar sense of transgression, asking practitioners to kill, have sex, lie, steal, and drink alcohol.[10] Just as the five meats are the precise opposite of normal meat, these commitments are the precise inverse of conventional monastic vows.

These antinomian attitudes are also expressed in tantric ritual and art. Instead of the calm, serene image of the Buddha found throughout Buddhist Asia, many tantric cycles depict wrathful, terrifying deities equipped with long fangs, flames, and numerous weapons. These wrathful deities are also frequently described as meat eaters. Sometimes this takes visual form, as when such a figure holds a human corpse as food, or a skull-cup of blood as drink (see figure 4.1).

At other times, these attitudes assume a more linguistic form, as in the deities known as *shasa khandro*, or "flesh-eating ḍākinīs." Here, the prospect of meat eating is used as shorthand to express the tantric, violent (yet still enlightened) nature of these divinities.

It is important to note that antinomian practices such as these do not define tantric Buddhism in its entirety. The tantras encourage many nontransgressive practices as well, and many tantric practitioners did not engage in antinomian conduct to any significant degree. While transgressive practices do not define tantra, however, they do form an important part of

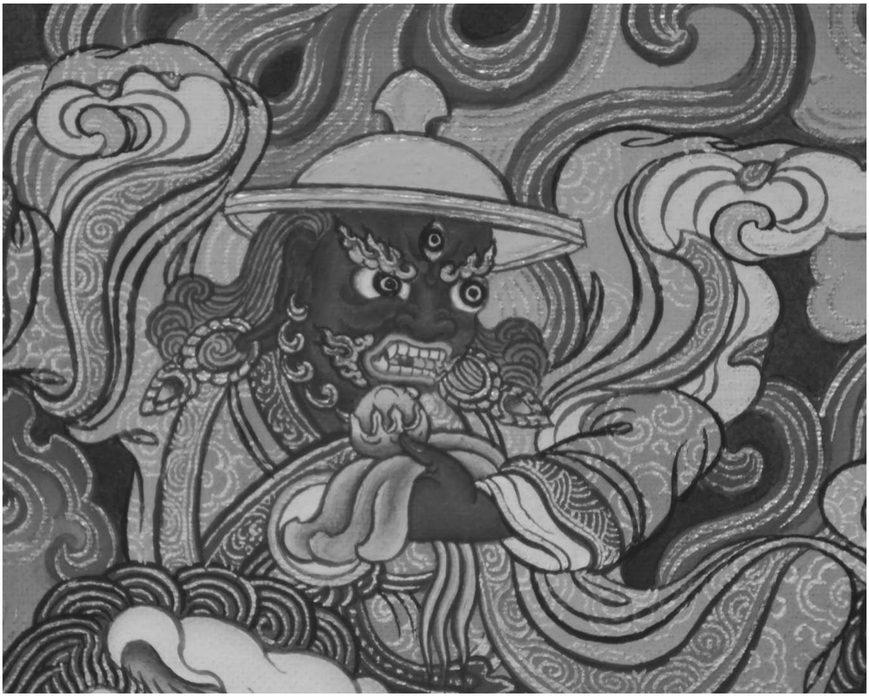


FIGURE 4.1 Tantric deity eating a human heart. Collection of the author.

tantric practice, helping to distinguish tantra from more conventional, sutric forms of Buddhism. These practices were justified by invoking the idea that, in the final analysis, questions of purity and impurity are merely mental imputations. In this line of thought, disgusting, polluting substances (such as the five meats) are not inherently disgusting or polluting. These are merely labels, applied by humans to substances that, in and of themselves, carry no value judgments at all.

Enlightened beings, on the other hand, do not apply dualistic labels. Instead, buddhas recognize that all such distinctions are ultimately unfounded, and abide in a non-dual mental state that is free of value judgments such as "disgusting" or "delicious." By requiring adherents to engage in antinomian behavior, these tantras are forcing them to put this philosophical idea into practice. Through these deliberately antinomian acts, an individual cultivates an awareness of the primordial purity of all phenomena and displays that awareness to others.

The requirement to consume these five meats aligns easily with these antinomian aspects of the tantric tradition. Consuming them clearly expressed the idea that social ideas of purity and impurity were ultimately unfounded. In his *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, Christian Wedemeyer has argued convincingly that, for Indian tantric practitioners, consuming the five meats was a means of ritually internalizing and displaying their attainment of a non-dual, enlightened mental state:

> Thus, by dramatically (and I use this term advisedly) demonstrating their transcendence of conventional dualistic categories of purity and pollution in the concluding portion of the rite of self-creation, the practitioners of these traditions signify ritually that their attainment of the enlightened state—which, it is worth remembering, is the starting and ending point of Buddhist tantric practice—is, in fact, a fait accompli.[11]

This willingness to ritually transcend categories of purity and pollution, however, does not mean that practitioners were encouraged to disregard social norms throughout their daily lives. Instead, Wedemeyer argues, the five meats were primarily consumed within a time-delimited ritual context. These were ritual practices, capable of powerful soteriological effects. But participation did not mean that an individual should violate social taboos outside of this ritual context. Eating the five meats was an exercise in cultivating a non-dual view but was not license to behave transgressively on a daily basis.[12]

Wedemeyer focuses on India, but most Tibetan theorists largely agree with his analysis: the antinomian aspects of tantra are occasional practices, performed only within a context in which they have soteriological value, and in which the more mainstream aspects of Buddhist life are not fully rejected. Jamgön Kongtrül, for instance, explains at length that these vows should be implemented with great care. While tantric practitioners do take vows to kill, lie, steal, and so on, Kongtrül argues that actually performing these actions can be done only in an appropriate context, and that they must not be taken as license to engage in socially destructive behavior.[13] The concerns that Kongtrül expresses were widespread, and many Tibetan religious leaders sought to tame the potential excesses of tantric practice by bringing it within the scope of more mainstream, monastic Buddhism. As David DiValerio puts it, in his study of some of the more extreme forms of tantric practice in Tibet, "Indian and Tibetan commentators seeking to resolve the tension between the dictates of monasticism and the antinomian behaviors prescribed in the tantras would commonly suggest a mode of enacting the tantras in which the literal was made figurative, the embodied made imagined, and the external internalized."[14] The commentators that DiValerio is referring to, including the majority of Tibetan thinkers, do not reject the soteriological value of antinomian tantric practice. They do domesticate these practices, however, interpreting them (including eating the five meats) in such a way that an individual could practice tantra while also remaining a monk in good standing.

There were, of course, exceptions. A few Tibetans took it upon themselves to implement the tantric practices described in the tantras in a literal way, wearing bone ornaments and clothing made of tiger pelts or human skin, living in graveyards, and consuming whatever presented itself, whether that food would normally be considered wholesome or revolting. These individuals, often referred to as *lama myönpa* or "holy madmen," took their tantric vows literally, and felt that they erased any commitment to conventional, monastic life. As DiValerio has shown, in fact, these individuals defined themselves in opposition to monastic life, holding themselves up as true tantric practitioners.[15] Despite the sometimes-legendary reputations of these figures, however, they remained well outside the mainstream of Tibetan religious practice. Instead of advocating the literal adoption of antinomian tantric practices, most interpreters advocated practicing them only in specific ritual contexts that allowed the practices to be effective without imperiling their commitment to more mainstream Buddhist values.

Despite this general sense that the antinomian aspects of tantric practice should be engaged in only under the appropriate conditions, on the specific issue of meat eating, many Tibetans seem to have taken their tantric commitments as license to eat meat on a daily basis, as part of a normal diet, and outside of any specific ritual context. Such an attitude is widespread among contemporary Tibetans, several of whom have specifically told me that their practice of tantra permits (even requires) them to eat meat in this manner. For them, the tantras justified not only the ritual consumption of the five meats, but also eating yak, mutton, and goat whenever these were available. Admittedly, I have not found any pre-communist Tibetan texts that explicitly claim that tantric practice either justifies or requires eating meat outside of a ritual context. As I show in a moment, however, many lamas sympathetic to vegetarianism were extremely critical of those who used their tantric practice as an excuse to eat meat in normal contexts. The frequency and strength of these critiques suggests that many pre-communist Tibetans did, in fact, use their tantric commitments to explain and justify their day-to-day consumption of meat, just as their contemporary counterparts do.

In making such critiques, many authors highlight the fact that the tantras specifically require the five meats. In his 1708 commentary on Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, for instance, Lochen Dharmasri argues that tantric practitioners should "eat suitable tantric substances for the sake of pride in the [tantric] family, ego, and breaking down the discrimination between clean and unclean. That is, [eat] meats that have died naturally, such as the five approved meats, which are not slaughtered for the sake of their meat in civilized places."[16] Lochen Dharmasri specifically highlights the transgressive nature of the five meats, noting that they are not foods normally eaten in "civilized places." It is this uncivilized status that gives them their potency, allowing them to "brea[k] down the discrimination between clean and unclean." For Lochen Dharmasri and many others, the whole point of consuming meat in a tantric context is that it is abnormal, consumed as an intentional form of ritualized practice.

Patrül Rinpoché expands on this point in his *Words of My Perfect Teacher*, critiquing those who bring the wrong motivation to their consumption of the five meats: "Eating [the five meats] wantonly in towns, because you are attached to the taste of meat, is the fault known as 'behaving carelessly with the tantric commitment of consumption.' "[17] Patrül makes a distinction between those who eat the five meats as a practice and those who do so simply because they like the taste. Not only is the latter not justified by the tantras, but Patrül argues that eating meat in this way is actually a violation of the practitioner's commitments. Like Lochen Dharmasri, Patrül does not dispute the basic idea that the tantric commitments require the consumption of the five meats. Instead, his concern is to distinguish the consumption of the five meats as part of a tantric ritual from eating regular meat out of greed or hunger. Within the ritual, consuming the disgusting and polluted five meats can help to break down dualistic notions of pure and impure. Eating meat, even the five meats, as a routine part of daily life misses this point and so cannot be justified through one's tantric commitments. Instead, the five meats should only be consumed in specific, soteriologically effective contexts.

Ritual Feasting

Most commonly, that context was provided by the communal feast offering ritual, known in Tibetan as *tsok.* This ritual, in one form or another, is one of the most widespread tantric practices in Tibet, included in most (if not quite all) tantric cycles. Like other forms of tantric practice, the various iterations of this ritual differ in many ways, including the size of the group involved, the length of the ritual, and the identity of the central deity or deities. Despite these differences, however, most iterations of the communal feast ritual adhere to the same broad pattern. Such rites are usually performed by a group and open by reciting a prayer taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, followed by a prayer to generate the compassionate attitude of a bodhisattva. This completed, the practitioners visualize the details of whichever deity is the focus of the ritual, including the main deity, their retinue, and their celestial palace. Eventually, the deities are invited to come and dwell in actuality among the practitioners.

Once the relevant deities have been invited, the participants proceed to arrange food offerings, ritually transform these offerings into divine foodstuffs, and present them to the various deities, usually understood to be actually present. In many ways, these offerings are the heart of the ritual. The actual substances offered vary, but often include specially designed ritual cakes and specially prepared ritual drinks. The bulk of the offering substances, however, consist of everyday foods. In contemporary Tibetan communities, for instance, packaged biscuits are a favorite offering, as are bottled sodas and other drinks. Whatever the physical nature of the offerings, they are transformed through the ritual process into divine food and drink, suitable for the deities that are the chief focus of the rite. Once the offerings have been presented to the deities, the practitioners conclude by asking the deities to return to their own homes and dedicating the positive karma of the session to all beings. Finally, any leftover food is distributed among both participants and other community members. In this way the blessings of the ritual are distributed to the community.

Importantly for our discussion here, many feast rituals explicitly call for the inclusion of meat among the offering substances. Ideally, this is the five meats, but at times ordinary meat is used as a substitute. In his commentary on the tantric cycle known as *The Gathered Intention of the Lamas*, Jigmé Lingpa explains the role of meat and other unclean substances in feast rituals:

> When performing many tsok rituals, look at base and dirty foods such as the five meats, five nectars, garlic, onions, and impure meats such as fish and pork and [regard them] all as feast substances. Because they are feast substances, dualistic thinking—such as dividing things into pure and impure, clean and unclean—must be abandoned. Through regarding it all as non-dual, the nectars naturally become useable.[18]

In suggesting that the five meats be consumed as an expression of non-duality, Jigmé Lingpa is drawing on the same ideas and discourses as Lochen Dharmasri and Patrül Rinpoché. What Jigmé Lingpa adds is simply the ritual context within which the consumption of these substances can be effective means of liberation rather than an ordinary expression of desire for tasty food. Like Jigmé Lingpa, most Tibetan authors, even those otherwise supportive of vegetarianism, accepted the presence of meat in the feast ritual. As I have already shown, Jigmé Lingpa argues strongly against the consumption of meat in other texts, terming it a "sinful food."[19] Here, on the other hand, we have just seen him describe the benefits of including the five meats in *tsok*. Other authors made similar points, explicitly requiring their students to consume meat within the context of the *tsok* ritual feast while continuing to advocate for vegetarianism in daily life.

This position, allowing meat in the feast ritual but forbidding it elsewhere, hinged on these authors' understanding of the relationship between the three vows. As discussed extensively in the previous chapter, Tibetan three-vow theory posits that in situations where two sets of vows conflict, the higher set takes precedence. Thus, the compassionate vow of the bodhisattva supersedes the vows of individual liberation. The same logic also applies to the tantric commitments: in cases where the vows conflict, the tantric commitments take precedence over both the bodhisattva vow and the vows of individual liberation. And most Tibetan lamas understood the tantric commitments to require the consumption of the five meats during *tsok*. Therefore, even though Jigmé Lingpa frequently argues against eating meat, he is also able to assert that the five meats are not only allowed, but actually required in this ritual. In Jigmé Lingpa and others' understanding, however, the tantric commitment to eat the five meats only applied in the context of *tsok* or similar practices, when the soteriological benefits of the practice could be fully realized. Outside of that ritual context, the tantric commitments had nothing to say about eating meat, and so the bodhisattva vow still applied. For those who believed the bodhisattva vow pointed toward vegetarianism, therefore, the tantric commitment to eat the five meats did not justify the consumption of meat in normal, daily life.

Even within the context of *tsok*, however, not all authors were entirely comfortable with consuming the five meats. Some admitted that the five meats were necessary, but argued that only the smallest amount possible should be used. Karma Chakmé, for instance, asserts that, "if you refuse to eat meat in *tsok*, you will be committing the thirteenth root downfall [i.e., breaking one's tantric commitments]."[20] He goes on to argue, however, that you do not need a lot of meat to fulfill this commitment. In fact, an amount "equal in size to the legs of an ant" is sufficient.[21] This passage comes from Karma Chakmé's *The Faults of Meat*, a text which, taken as a whole, makes clear that Karma Chakmé sees eating meat as deeply problematic. By advocating only the smallest possible amount of meat, Karma Chakmé is able to adhere to the demands of the tantric commitments while also maintaining a vegetarian ideal.

A few lamas took this a step further, employing substitutes to remove the need for actual meat entirely. In his *A Letter to Benefit Students*, for instance, Ngorchen Künga Zangpo argues strongly against those who felt that their practice of tantra required the consumption of meat. Instead, citing previous masters in his lineage, he argues that substitutes are acceptable:

> Someone might say that when being initiated into the highest mandala [i.e., the highest level of tantric practice], one needs to accept the substances of the secret empowerment and that [rejecting meat and alcohol] contradicts this. But the revered Sakyapa masters have explained that, for the purposes of the secret empowerment, beer, honey, yogurt and so on are suitable substitutes for bodhicitta [i.e., the tantric substances]. They explain that you should taste a mere drop of these on the tongue. They do not say that you should rely on large amounts of alcohol and meat![22]

Taking a different tack, the famed twentieth-century master Düdjom Rinpoché Jigdrel Yeshé Dorjé advocates a particular ritual to obviate the need for actual meat in the ritual process. He explains this process in a series of texts describing the performance of the *mendrüp*, or "medicinal accomplishment" ritual, an extensive, multiday ritual akin to the communal feast. The most extensive of these works, written in 1951, suggests that rather than use actual meat, practitioners should press dough into boards carved with the images of animals. These dough figurines are then visualized as the meat and blood of animals that have died naturally.[23] In a way, this process simply adds another layer of transformation: before transforming the five meats into divine food, the practitioner first ritually transforms the dough effigies into the meats themselves.

I have seen no evidence that Düdjom Rinpoché was a vegetarian himself, or that he actively advocated vegetarianism. And the texts themselves suggest that his reluctance to use meat may not be connected to ethical concerns about killing animals. He notes, for instance, that it may be difficult to obtain the actual five meats, or that even if you can obtain them you may not be mentally disciplined enough to effectively transform such potent substances.[24] Even if Düdjom Rinpoché himself was not concerned with killing animals for their meat, however, some of his students and lineage heirs interpret this ritual in a way that does highlight concern for animal suffering. Lama Kunzang Dorjee, for instance, is a strong advocate for vegetarianism and animal compassion in contemporary Bhutan and has highlighted the fact that Düdjom Rinpoché's medicinal accomplishment ritual does not require him to use actual meat.[25] Whatever Düdjom Rinpoché's original intention, his creative structuring of the feast ritual has allowed other lamas to perform these rituals without the use of any actual meat.

Other authors accepted that the five meats called for in the *tsok* ritual referred to real substances but noted that the ritualist is required to transform the meats into divine nectar, a task beyond the skill of ordinary practitioners. Such individuals should, therefore, simply avoid using meat. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century master Rigdzin Garwang, for instance, tells a story about the master Nyakla Pema Düdül, one of his own early teachers and a staunch vegetarian. In Rigdzin Garwang's telling, some students ask Nyakla Pema Düdül about using meat in *tsok*. In response, Nyakla Pema Düdül asks, "Who among you is able to benefit by using the flesh and blood of your father and mother? I am not."[26] Rigdzin Garwang goes on to support this position with quotations from many sutras and tantras, acknowledging that some do say that meat is appropriate in the tantras. Ultimately, however, he concludes that, "unless you have the power of meditative stability with the deities and the mantras, the sutras and tantras all say that meat and blood are totally forbidden."[27] For Rigdzin Garwang, the first question is whether or not an individual has achieved meditative stability. If they have, then meat is acceptable. But most have not, so it should be avoided.

The eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé, takes this argument a step further in his *Great Commentary on the Vinayasūtra*. Mikyö Dorjé opens by assuming a debating stance and asking an unnamed opponent, "Does the meat and alcohol that goes into the nectar of samaya need to be transformed or not?"[28] Having asked this question, Mikyö Dorjé proceeds to critique both possible answers. If they do not need to be transformed, then that would mean the practitioner already perceives them as pure. For such a practitioner, all substances are pure, Mikyö Dorjé argues, so there is no need to use actual meat. If, on the other hand, the meat does need to be ritually transformed before it can be considered divine nectar, "then, in order to be powerful enough to effect this transformation, one must have achieved the path of preparation in Unexcelled Mantra [i.e., the practitioner must have achieved a very high level of realization]."[29] In the end, the only people qualified to use meat and alcohol in the feast ritual are those who have already reached high levels of religious attainment. But, already seeing all phenomena as equally pure, these individuals have no need to use meat at all.[30]

Mikyö Dorjé was a strong proponent of vegetarianism. He wrote an entire text on the faults of meat, and his monastery rulebook for Tsurpu explicitly requests that his monks avoid meat. It is, therefore, not terribly surprising that he manages to argue his way out of using meat in the performance of *tsok* feast rituals. Mikyö Dorjé was not alone in this position, however. While no other authors that I am aware of argue against meat in the feast ritual with as much clarity and attention to detail as Mikyö Dorjé, several come to the same conclusion: meat should only be employed by those actually able to transform the meat into nectar. Since most practitioners are not able to do this, they should avoid using meat entirely.

Ultimately, whether a particular author argues that the quantity of meat in the feast should be minimized, uses a substitute, or argues that meat should be relinquished entirely, they are all expressing discomfort with the requirement that the five meats be included in tantric ritual practice. Most Tibetan ritualists, including many who were otherwise staunch vegetarians, continued to use meat in feast offerings. Nevertheless, there was an ongoing and sustained current of thought that was uncomfortable with this ritual use of meat and that sought ways around it.

At certain times and places, this argument was prevalent enough to distress those lamas who wanted to continue using meat in their ritual offerings. The eastern Tibetan region of Kham in the late nineteenth century appears to have been one such time and place. As described in the first chapter of this book, this was a time when the vegetarian movement was at its peak, with several influential figures both adopting the diet themselves and promoting it strongly. Some of these figures, such as Nyakla Pema Düdül and Patrül Rinpoché, were also on record explicitly critiquing the overuse of meat in tantric ritual contexts.

The impact of these critiques is demonstrated by a remarkable passage in the *Autobiography* of Düdjom Lingpa, Düdjom Rinpoché's previous incarnation. In this account, Düdjom Lingpa recalls that in the summer of 1888 a deity appeared in a dream and chastised him for not offering enough meat. The deity's meat-locker was empty, and he blamed Düdjom Lingpa. In response, Düdjom Lingpa informs the deity that "scholars say that it is inappropriate to use meat and blood as offerings. What do you think of that?"[31] The deity laughs, claiming that all spirits like him enjoy meat, and that meat offerings are, therefore, entirely appropriate. In the end, Düdjom Lingpa resumes using meat in his feast offerings. Without it, he seems to fear that the deities will not be pleased and his rituals will be ineffective. Still, this account makes clear that critiques of the ritual use of meat had penetrated the religious community, to the extent that Düdjom Lingpa feels like he has to defend himself. As the rest of his *Autobiography* demonstrates, Düdjom Lingpa remained an unrepentant meat eater for his entire life. And yet here he appears caught between the arguments of "learned people" and his own fear that, without meat, his rituals will be ineffective.

Despite these critiques and modifications—Karma Chakmé's concern to minimize the amount of meat used in feast offerings, Düdjom Rinpoché's ritual substitutions, Mikyö Dorjé's philosophical objections, and the social pressures that lead Düdjom Lingpa to temporarily give up meat offerings—most Tibetan ritualists continued to use meat in the communal feast and other tantric offering rituals. This is even true of many figures who were otherwise adamantly opposed to eating meat. For these individuals, the tantric commitment to eat the five meats superseded the compassion demanded by the bodhisattva vow. At the same time, however, many of these same individuals insisted that the need for meat in ritual practice did not give tantric practitioners license to eat meat on a daily basis. In this interpretation, the tantric commitment to eat meat only applies in the context of the ritual offering. Outside of that context, the commitments have nothing to say about meat, and so the bodhisattva vow still applies. Despite acknowledging the tantric requirement to consume meat, these figures continued to advocate vegetarianism on a day-to-day basis.

Other Tantric Perspectives

In the tantric context, discussions of meat eating primarily involved the issue of the five meats. As important as this discussion was, however, it is not the only tantric perspective worth considering here. Noting that some higher tantras advocate engaging with objects of desire as a path toward liberation, some Tibetans have argued that meat should be eaten simply because it is delicious. In this presentation, meat is useful less for its antinomian aspects than because it allows tantric practitioners to engage with—and ultimately see through—their desires. Ngorchen Künga Zangpo explains this position well:

> Some say, "Even if someone on the three lower levels of tantra needs to abandon meat, this does not apply to those on the higher tantras. One does not become accomplished by tormenting the body through ascetic vows! If one relies on the enjoyment of all sense pleasures, then it will be swiftly accomplished." Through such explanations, they say that wisdom does not come through the ascetic practice of rejecting meat and alcohol. On the contrary, it is opposed to it.[32]

In Ngorchen's presentation, some Tibetans (who Ngorchen does not name) suggest that vegetarianism is an ascetic practice, and as such is in opposition with the highest tantras, which encourage practitioners to engage fully with objects of desire.

Given the strength of Ngorchen's personal vegetarianism, it is not surprising that he rejects this approach. Instead, he points to a list of other ascetic practices provided by the Indian master Chandrakīrti, pointing out that vegetarianism is not included in this list:

> The master Chandrakīrti has explained these passages: "Sitting in a temple hall or other place to exhaust your body. Sitting under a tree, or otherwise practicing the twelve vows of ascetic discipline. Jumping off cliffs [to injure yourself],

> and so on. All of this is terrible!" All of these are explained as non-Buddhist ascetic techniques. But merely rejecting meat and alcohol is not included in this explanation![33]

In the second chapter of this book, I showed that some Tibetans felt that vegetarianism was a form of ascetic practice, associated with the Buddha's cousin and rival Devadatta. In Ngorchen's presentation, this familiar position is reworked from a tantric perspective: the tantras require engaging with objects of desire, so some say that vegetarianism should be rejected as a type of ascetic practice that is opposed to the tantras. In response, Ngorchen simply points to Chandrakīrti's comments on extreme ascetic practices, pointing out that vegetarianism is not included.

Taking a different approach, some tantric practitioners claimed that their tantric practice was so powerful that they actually benefited animals by eating them. It was liberation through consumption. In this argument, the practice of Buddhist tantra is seen as an exceptionally powerful means of achieving liberation. It is not, however, easy to be born into a situation where one can practice tantra effectively. Achieving such a birth requires a strong karmic connection with tantric practice. Some tantric practitioners believed that by eating the flesh of an animal while focusing on that animal's future welfare, they could establish these strong karmic connections. In the future, they argued, these connections would propel the animal to a birth where it would be able to practice tantra, possibly even as a student of the practitioner who had previously eaten it. Eating the meat of an animal, therefore, was actually a form of kindness, causing some temporary suffering but ultimately benefiting the animal.

As with other pro-meat arguments discussed in this book, I have not found any textual sources promoting this stance. Like those other positions, however, authors sympathetic to vegetarianism routinely critique the idea that a tantric practitioner could actually benefit an animal by eating it. Further, some contemporary Tibetans, both religious leaders and ordinary practitioners, used this argument to explain their own meat consumption. Both these contemporary figures and earlier textual critiques are scattered among different lineages, time periods, and geographical regions, suggesting that despite the paucity of direct evidence for this position, it may have been relatively widespread.

In making this argument, several Tibetans pointed to the ninth-century Indian master Tilopa as the preeminent example of this practice. Tibetans remember this figure as a great Indian tantric master of particular importance to the Kagyü school. According to a well-known story, when Naropa first encountered Tilopa, the latter was sitting by a river, sinking his teeth into some fish he had just caught. Rather than being turned off by this spectacle, however, Naropa prostrates to his new master and asks why he is behaving in this way. Tilopa explains that he is not really interested in eating the fish; instead, he is using his tantric power to send the consciousness of each fish to a new, superior birth.[34] This story is preserved in many artistic renditions of Tilopa, where the master is often portrayed with a fish in his right hand (figure 4.2).

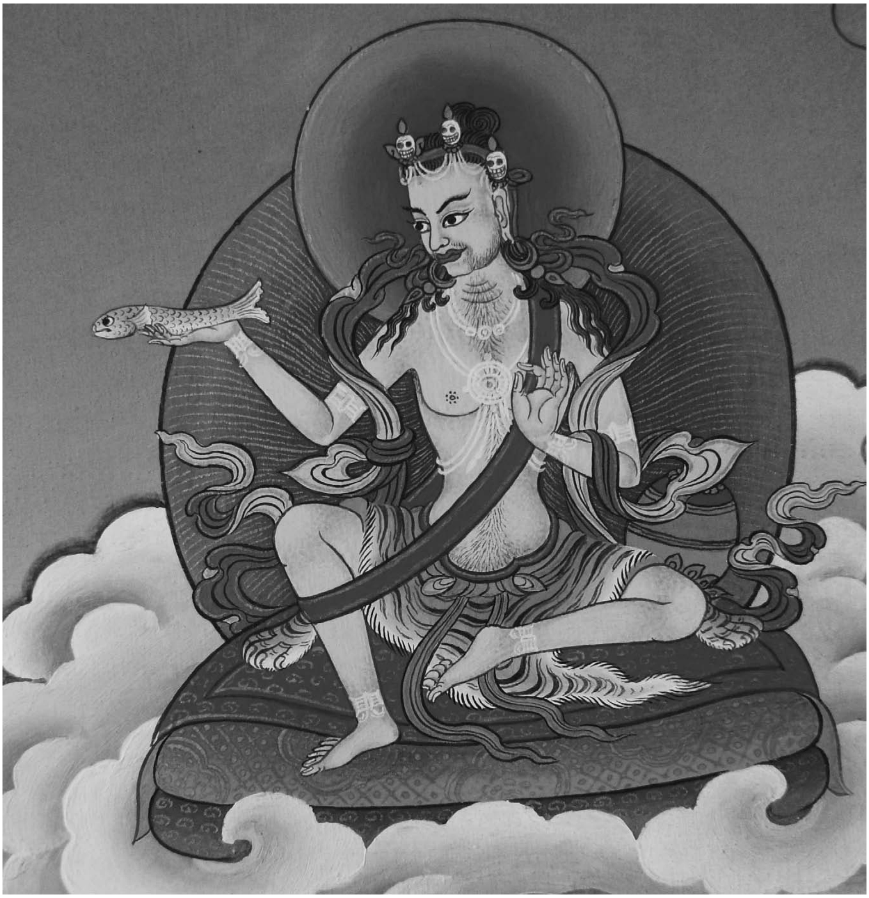


FIGURE 4.2 Contemporary painting of Tilopa. Collection of the author.

The story of Tilopa and his fish was—and is—widely known in Tibet, and few critics tried to argue against it directly. Instead, authors sympathetic to vegetarianism tended to acknowledge that someone like Tilopa could, in fact, benefit animals by eating them. This ability, however, was limited to those who had reached the highest levels of religious attainment. Ordinary practitioners, these authors maintained, should accurately assess their own abilities and refrain from eating meat. Perhaps the best example of this critique comes from the writings of Jigmé Lingpa, who advises his students, "You should think like this: 'In a tantric context, it's great if someone has given rise to the power of concentration, so that he is not tainted by obscurations and is able to benefit beings through a connection with their meat and blood. But I do not have this confidence.' "[35] Jigmé Lingpa and others like him insist that their students reflect honestly on their own attainment and not undertake practices that are beyond them.

This argument against liberation through consumption and the argument against seeing meat as a necessary object of desire both dovetail nicely with concerns against justifying eating meat based on the tantric commitment to eat the five meats. In all cases, these authors are arguing against an over-literal interpretation of the tantras that loses sight of the practical impact of one's actions. Sure, they argue, the tantric commitments say a practitioner must eat the five meats, and a practitioner could benefit from cultivating desire for meat, or even, in theory, benefit an animal by eating it. But practitioners must be honest judges of their own ability and be careful to not get so caught up in these aspects of tantric practice that they forget the ultimate purpose of Buddhist practice: to benefit beings.

The Nyüngné Fasting Ritual

Both Nyingma and Sarma doxographies enumerate several different classes or categories of tantra, each of which incorporates different views and practices. Generally speaking, the antinomian practices discussed above—including the intentional consumption of meat—are drawn from the more advanced levels. These tantric cycles were widely considered to contain the most profound practices and, not surprisingly, were the most popular among Tibetan practitioners. While most practitioners focused on advanced practices, however, other tantric cycles remained in use. Of particular importance to this project is the category known as "action tantra" (*kriya tantra* in Sanskrit). Often considered the lowest category of tantra, the action tantras contain practices notably distinct from those discussed previously. Rather than emphasizing a non-dual mental state, the action tantras emphasize external, worldly conduct, especially ritual purity. As Jamgön Kongtrül explains, "Action tantra emphasizes outer conduct. It is called 'action' because one practices these tantras based on teachings concerning bathing, cleanliness, and purity."[36]

Seen as a lower, less potent category of tantric practice, action tantra rituals are, with a single important exception, relatively rare in Tibet. That exception is the nyüngné fasting ritual. This ritual focuses on the purification of one's past negative actions and was popular across the Tibetan plateau. As part of this ritual purification, practitioners are often asked to maintain a vegetarian diet during the course of the ritual. There is no requirement that this diet be maintained after the ritual ends, but even if it is temporary, this vegetarianism still reflects a recognition that meat is religiously problematic.

Like tsok, nyüngné is practiced by all of the major Buddhist traditions in Tibet, though each follows a slightly different version. Again, however, some basic forms are common to most, if not all, iterations. Typically, the nyüngné ritual is conducted over two days, though this may be repeated, creating a ritual that lasts four days, six days, eight days, or sometimes much longer. On the first day, participants generally eat only vegetarian food while engaging in prayers, prostrations, and visualizations. Commonly, these practices focus on the deity Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. The prayers, prostrations, and visualizations continue on the second day, but now the fast is total: no food or drink of any kind is allowed. If the ritual is to be concluded at this point, the practitioners break their fast on the third day, then return to normal life. If it is to be repeated, the practitioners will continue to alternate between days where they eat only vegetarian food and days where they do not eat at all.[37]

In line with its association with action tantra, the nyüngné ritual is understood to be a particularly powerful method to purify previous negative karma. As Roger Jackson has pointed out in his discussion of nyüngné, many Tibetans believe that the more zealously one pursues purification, the more negative karma will be eliminated. The ascetic intensity of the nyüngné ritual—including dietary restrictions and a rigorous program of prostrations—is thus a particularly potent method for removing previous karmic stains.[38] In highest yoga tantra, the emphasis was on attaining the non-dual mind-set characteristic of enlightenment itself. Here, the emphasis is on karma and its purification.

Vegetarianism, in this context, is understood quite differently than what we have seen so far. Whereas other discussions of vegetarianism focus on the fact that eating meat harms animals, in nyüngné the concern is over the effect of meat on a practitioner's ritual purity. Meat, in this system, is considered polluting and corrupting, in conflict with the ritual purity that is one of the main focuses of action tantra. This point can be seen in Donyö Drubpa's fifteenth-century *Commentary on Distinguishing the Three Vows*, wherein he asserts, "The mantras of action tantra are accomplished through eating the three whites (yogurt, butter, and milk) and the three sweets (sugar, molasses and honey), through purity, and through nyüngné rituals."[39] Vegetarianism, expressed in the command to eat the three whites and three sweets, is here connected solely to questions of ritual purity. Animal suffering is not mentioned at all.

Nyüngné's position somewhat outside mainstream discussions of vegetarianism is further highlighted by the fact that nyüngné (and the action tantras more broadly) are only rarely mentioned in texts focusing on vegetarianism. An author will occasionally cite an action tantra's critique of meat, but there is rarely any significant discussion of these texts or the role of meat in the context of ritual purity. Instead, the central concern in most non-nyüngné discussions of vegetarianism remains animal suffering and the ability of vegetarianism to reduce that suffering. Nyüngné, with its emphasis on ritual purity, seems to be outside this discussion, despite the fact that temporarily adopting a meat-free diet is a standard part of the ritual.

This does not mean that there is a complete separation between the vegetarianism practiced as part of the nyüngné ritual and concerns over animal suffering. For one thing, most nyüngné rituals focus on the deity Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. The ritual, therefore, consistently asks practitioners to reflect on the virtues of a compassionate mind-set. Perhaps for this reason, some texts on meat in nyüngné do refer to compassion and the suffering of animals. A good example can be found in the *Eight Branch Mending Practice for Nyüngné*, written in the early nineteenth century by Pema Nyingjé Wangpo, the ninth Tai Situ incarnation. Pema Nyingjé Wangpo includes an extended critique of meat, but he does not discuss issues of purity, despite the fact that he is discussing the nyüngné ritual. Instead, his entire critique is focused on the importance of compassion and the suffering animals experience because of eating meat.[40] Nyüngné practitioners were not isolated from broader discussions of meat eating. As Pema Nyingjé Wangpo's work displays, some did incorporate concern for animal suffering into their ritual materials. Despite this occasional overlap, however, the roots of nyüngné vegetarianism remain conceptually distinct from other debates over meat eating, hinging on questions of ritual purity rather than compassion for slaughtered animals.

This distinction is particularly striking as the nyüngné ritual is a common practice among Tibetan Buddhists. Nyüngné rituals exist in all Tibetan lineages, and biographies of prominent lamas often mention their promotion of the practice. Contemporary anthropologists have described nyüngné rituals from many parts of the Tibetan plateau, generally presenting the events as well attended, despite the rigorous physical activity required.[41] These anthropological accounts reflect contemporary practice, but there can be little doubt that nyüngné was popular in the pre-communist period as well. This popularity was possible, in part, because nyüngné was open to those outside the religious elite. Many of those who participate in contemporary nyüngné practices are either laity or nuns.[42] Further, there is evidence to suggest that this was also the case in previous generations. Nicola Schneider's account of the lives of early twentieth-century nuns at Drakar Gompa in Kham, for instance, highlights the popularity of nyüngné in this community.[43] Both nuns and laity are frequently marginalized in Tibetan religious life and are largely excluded from the type of intensive religious practice available to monks and other professional male practitioners. For these communities, nyüngné provided an opportunity to engage in significant religious practice. As Kim Gutschow puts it, "The fast undermines the distance between these two layers [monastic and lay], by allowing lay villagers to briefly sojourn in the monastic realm."[44]

Outside the nyüngné context, the evidence suggests vegetarianism was primarily an elite practice. As discussed in the next chapter, it was largely the elite who had the resources and flexibility to disentangle themselves from the perceived need for meat. Nyüngné, on the other hand, allowed marginalized religious groups to adopt a meat-free diet, if only for a few days. In fact, given the popularity of the nyüngné ritual, it seems reasonable to guess that more Tibetans were exposed to vegetarianism through this ritual than by any other means. Nyüngné, therefore, occupies an interesting position in the story of Tibetan vegetarianism. On the one hand, it was arguably the most common context within which someone might adopt vegetarianism. On the other, the rhetoric surrounding vegetarianism in nyüngné diverges sharply from that encountered in other contexts. Like the nuns and laity who practiced nyüngné, vegetarianism here occupies a position that is both central to Tibetan Buddhist practice and yet also marginal to the elite discourse that dominates the tradition.

Conclusion

The tantric commitments add considerable complexity to Tibetan debates over vegetarianism. Most, though by no means all, exegetes recognized and acknowledged that the tantric commitments require some consumption of meat. And, according to standard interpretations of the relationship between the three vows, these tantric commitments supersede both the vows of individual liberation and the bodhisattva vow. Anyone who has undertaken tantric commitments, therefore, is required to eat meat. Because of this logic, many individuals who were otherwise staunch vegetarians did consume meat in what they felt was the appropriate tantric context. The argument, then, is not over meat itself but over the context: what kinds of meat must be eaten, how often should it be done, and how much is allowed. For many Tibetans, the answer to these questions seems to have been relatively relaxed. For them, the tantric commitments required, or at least justified, the consumption of meat on a normal, daily basis.

Those Tibetans sympathetic to vegetarianism, on the other hand, argued that the tantric commitments were actually quite restrictive, allowing only the consumption of a small quantity of the five meats, and only within the context of the *tsok* ritual feast. Outside this context, they argued, the tantras have little to say about eating meat, neither rejecting nor condoning it. And since the tantras do not comment on the matter, the bodhisattva vow is still in effect and people should avoid consuming meat. As Dolpopa asks rhetorically in his *Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol*, “Is the Mahāyāna not important in tantra?”[45] For teachers such as Dolpopa, the compassionate orientation of the Mahāyāna gave tantric practice its context. The fact that the tantras require some meat consumption, therefore, did not mean that an individual pursuing high tantric practice could not maintain and promote a primarily vegetarian diet. Thus, while the tantras certainly added new complications to these debates, they did not fundamentally alter the stance of those who saw meat as incompatible with the compassionate attitude expected of Buddhist practitioners.

Over these three chapters, I have analyzed the role of meat according to each of the three sets of vows commonly taken by Tibetan Buddhists. Dividing this discussion into these three perspectives has allowed me to approach a complicated issue in an explicitly multifaceted way. These perspectives differ in important ways, and each is an important part of the broader debates over eating meat. This approach also has the advantage of mirroring the Tibetan sources themselves, many of which divide their discussion, either explicitly or implicitly, according to the differences between the three vows.

At the same time, splitting this discussion into three parts runs the risk of obscuring the fact that all three perspectives are part of a single debate: whether it is appropriate to eat meat. While many Tibetan authors divided their texts according to the three vows, these were sections of a larger, unified text. Like those who studied three-vow theory more broadly, these authors sought to show how these different vows interacted with each other to create a unified ethical theory that could be applied in individual lives.

At the heart of this unified discussion of meat eating is the ideal of compassion. All Tibetans agreed that slaughtering animals caused them to suffer and that animal suffering was something to be remedied. Analysis of compassion aligns most readily with the bodhisattva vow, but this ideal influences and colors debates over the other vows as well. The importance placed on compassion, for instance, is the driving force behind discomfort with the permission to eat meat found in discussions of the vows of individual liberation. Similarly, when these authors analyze the place of meat in the tantric commitments, they do so in the light of the Bodhisattva vow, trying to ensure that practitioners do not take tantra as a license to stray too far from the compassionate ideal.

This emphasis on compassion is not, in and of itself, surprising. Tibetan Buddhism, after all, often presents compassion as the central motivation for all religious practice. The whole point of Buddhism, in this view, is to alleviate the suffering of others. And many Tibetans understood meat eating to directly cause animal suffering, making it incompatible with a compassionate, Buddhist lifestyle. In many ways, this simple observation—that eating meat causes suffering and is, therefore, opposed to compassion—is the heart of the arguments against meat. The rest of the debate, the details and differing perspectives, are simply attempts to make sense of this basic observation in light of other textual and theoretical commitments.

And yet, despite the apparent simplicity and clarity of this critique, we must not lose sight of the fact that most Tibetans continued to eat meat. As we have seen, many Tibetans argued, sometimes quite vehemently, that meat was unacceptable. Nor was this concern isolated in terms or space and time: Tibetans from all regions, religious schools, and time periods have practiced and promoted vegetarianism. It is quite apparent that concern and discomfort over eating meat was widespread. But that concern was not enough to convince a majority of the population, or even a majority of the monastic population, to actually give up meat. Over the next two chapters, I investigate why this is. Why, when so many respected religious leaders denounced meat, did so few actually give it up?

FIVE

A Necessary Evil

AS I HAVE NOW SHOWN, many Tibetan religious leaders argued—often passionately—in favor of vegetarianism. Their arguments rested on core Buddhist teachings, particularly the need for compassion. Nor was this a fringe debate: meat's critics were often highly respected Buddhist masters and came from all lineages, regions, and time periods. The strength and consistency of these arguments suggests that concern over the moral status of meat eating was widespread on the plateau. While such concern was widespread, actually adopting a vegetarian diet remained relatively rare. Over the next two chapters, I examine those aspects of Tibetan culture that opposed vegetarianism, pushing back against seemingly strong religious arguments and enabling the majority of the population to continue eating meat with a (relatively) clear conscience.

This discussion opens with an analysis of the widespread idea that meat was necessary for human life to flourish. Those who accepted this position did not necessarily dispute the idea that meat was morally problematic. But any moral or ethical quandaries they saw were superseded by a belief that meat was simply unavoidable. While consumption patterns varied by community, meat was an important part of the diet across the plateau. Further, many Tibetans believed, with the support of the Tibetan medical community, that without meat the human body would weaken, leading to illness and even premature death. This belief was widespread, shared even by many vegetarians, and formed the basis of a widespread perception that vegetarianism was a virtuous but dangerous diet. Meat, in short, was a necessary evil.

Dietary Options

If you ask a contemporary Tibetan why vegetarianism was so rare in pre-communist Tibet, you are likely to be told that environmental conditions made the diet either impossible or close to impossible to maintain. This claim has been made by no less an authority than the current Dalai Lama, who argues that "in Tibet the difficult geographical conditions—its climate and altitude—were not suitable for growing vegetables and the people have always had to depend on meat and dairy products to survive."[1] Similar arguments have been made by prominent lamas both in exile and inside Tibet, including the current Karmapa and Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, as well as many less prominent figures.[2] In many ways, this seems like a strong argument. Environmental conditions vary widely across the plateau, but many regions are located at high altitudes, making agriculture difficult.[3] It seems reasonable, therefore, to think that without meat, the Tibetan diet would simply have been insufficient to support human life.

As shown throughout this book, however, the Tibetan plateau hosted many vegetarians. Most of those that I have identified were elite religious leaders, whose economic station would have allowed them considerable flexibility in their diet. However, the simple fact that many Tibetans subsisted on a meat-free diet—often living long, full lives—suggests that meat was not, strictly speaking, necessary. Moreover, available sources, though limited, suggest that meat varied widely in its importance, integral to some communities but only tangential to others. The latter was particularly the case for lower-income groups, where meat may have been only an occasional luxury. Still, while some groups may not have eaten meat that often (or not as often as they would have liked), meat continued to be seen as an important part of the diet by a wide assortment of Tibetan communities. Giving it up was possible, but went against entrenched dietary norms and assumptions.

The difficulties of vegetarianism were particularly acute for Tibet's nomads.[4] Accurate numbers are not available, but it is clear that nomads constituted a large proportion of the pre-communist population, perhaps somewhere between 25 and 50 percent.[5] These communities, however, were not uniform. Some practiced a lifestyle more properly known as transhumance, living in tents alongside their herds, which they rotated between seasonal pastures. Others adopted a lifestyle sometimes called agro-pastoralism or pastoral nomadism, where some family members follow their herds while others remain settled in permanent homes, engaging in agriculture.[6] Each of these groups practice nomadism differently, but all take animal husbandry as central to their economic lives.

The most important animals for most Tibetan nomads were yak, sheep, and goat, though many also raised small numbers of horses for either riding or trade.[7] These animals provided sustenance in a variety of ways. Milk, for one, could be consumed raw but was more commonly turned into yogurt, cheese, or, most importantly, butter. A single female yak could provide ten to fifteen kilograms of butter annually, which could be preserved for up to a year, providing calories through the winter and into the lean spring months.[8] Both yak and sheep also provided wool, which could be woven into fabric for clothes or tents.[9] Butter, yogurt, and wool were used by nomads themselves, but they could also be sold, constituting an important stream of revenue.

In addition to nonlethal foods like butter and dairy, a nomad family's animals also provided meat. For many communities the meat they obtained from their animals was a crucial supplement to other food. In his study of an agro-pastoral community in the Himalayan region of Dolpo, for instance, Kenneth Bauer notes that although agriculture was foundational for this seminomadic community, it could provide only six to seven months' worth of food. The rest came from meat.[10] While meat was important to most nomad communities, however, the actual number of animals slaughtered for food varied by region and relative wealth. Goldstein and Beall observed that in the late 1980s, nomads from the highlands of western Tibet consumed, on average, four sheep or goats per person per year, while a wealthy family could inflate this number to eight to ten.[11] In the eastern region of Kham during the 1940s, Rinzin Thargyal claims that a family might slaughter between one and four yaks annually, depending on their wealth.[12] Paul Sherab, writing about the eastern region of Golok in the 1920s, reports that one sheep could sustain ten people for two days.[13] At roughly the same time in Amdo, on the other hand, Robert Ekvall reports that even a small family could kill fifty sheep *and* eight to ten yaks every year.[14] If these accounts are accurate, then although meat was clearly important to nomads across the plateau, the amount consumed varied widely by location and wealth.

Most of these animals were slaughtered in the fall, and meat was often the primary food throughout the cold winter months and into the spring. These meat reserves often began to run out in late spring, however, and families increasingly relied on other foods (either acquired through trade or grown by settled family members) during these months. This reliance on other foods in the spring and summer allowed nomads to avoid slaughtering until the animals had reached their full weight in the following fall.[15] A nomad's meat consumption could vary considerably, therefore, based not only on region, type of nomadism practiced, and wealth, but also on the time of year. Despite such variation, however, all nomadic communities that I am aware of depended on meat for a significant proportion of their annual food consumption, making vegetarianism extremely difficult. As Rinzin Thargyal notes, "Pastoral nomads in Zilphukhog, like their peers elsewhere in the world, could not do without taking the lives of animals for their survival."[16]

In contrast to nomads, Tibetan farmers had somewhat more flexibility in their food, though the Tibetan plateau's altitude and climate severely limit the crops that can be grown. In some regions, farmers plant buckwheat, mustard, and wheat. Some Tibetans also supplemented their diet by foraging for wild edibles such as *troma*, a small sweet potato frequently harvested in the winter and spring.[17] Climactic conditions made growing vegetables difficult, but it was possible in some areas. Pedro Carrasco, for instance, reports the cultivation of radishes and peas in some areas,[18] while Charles Bell notes that some vegetables were available in Lhasa in the early twentieth century.[19] Similarly, Paul Sherab notes that while meat was important in Lhasa, other foods were also available, including mustard, beans, vegetables, and even fruits such as apricots, pears, and apples.[20] Lhasa, of course, was a sophisticated urban center, and the presence of vegetables and fruit there does not necessarily mean they were available in other regions. Further, not all Tibetans ate vegetables, even when they were available. Writing in 2013, Khentrul Rinpoché recalls that, "[until] about eighteen years ago, most of the people in my village didn't even know that vegetables could be eaten by humans."[21] Instead of eating them themselves, any vegetables the villagers happened upon were given to their animals.

By far the most important crop in Tibet was barley, consumed in the form of *tsampa*. Tsampa is created by roasting barley kernels, then grinding them into fine flour. This flour can be eaten in many ways, but most frequently it is mixed with tea and rolled into doughy balls, which are eaten uncooked.

Tsampa was eaten year-round by nomads, but was particularly important in spring, when meat supplies ran low. Indeed, despite their ready access to meat, tsampa was the basic dietary staple for many nomads.[22] Even more so than for nomads, tsampa was the central element in farmers' diets. For most Tibetans, tsampa was the most important staple in their diet. Beyond its practical value, tsampa was an important cultural touchstone.[23] So much so, in fact, that it is often included in popular definitions of Tibetan self-identity, either alone (i.e., Tibetans are "tsampa eaters")[24] or as part of a binary ("Tibetans are those who speak the Tibetan language and eat tsampa").[25]

Farmers would have had ready access to tsampa (and other foods), making meat significantly less necessary than it was for nomads. In his *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, Tashi Khedrup recalls that, as a child in a relatively wealthy farming family near Lhasa in the 1940s, "the main meal at home was at midday when we had tsampa, potatoes, cheese, and sometimes meat."[26] For Tashi Khedrup, and presumably many other farming families, the bulk of the daily diet was made up of nonmeat foods. Meat, while present, was more of a supplement than a dietary staple. Moreover, as with nomadic families, the amount of meat a particular farming family might consume seems to have varied considerably according to their wealth. Tashi Khedrup notes that his family was one of the wealthiest families in his village, and that in addition to their farmlands his father ran a successful business hiring out mules. As such, meat was a relatively common supplement to their diet, though not a daily staple. Those who worked the family's land, on the other hand, did not necessarily eat meat. Tashi Khedrup recalls that as a youth he was responsible for feeding these workers, "handing out the tea and tsampa for the workers' rations."[27] Tashi Khedrup's recollections suggest a pattern in which meat was a regular (if not daily) supplement to other foods in relatively wealthy households but not something that would be distributed to workers. Unfortunately, he does not describe what these workers ate when they went home at night, but the general pattern suggests that meat may have been relatively rare for these poorer families.

As this suggests, meat seems to have been relatively expensive, especially for those, like many farming families, who did not keep large herds of animals. Nomads relied on animals for the majority of their economic output, so it is not surprising that they relied on meat as a major part of their diet. They had to pay attention to the size of their herds, and nomads with larger herds could slaughter more animals, but when compared with Tibetan farmers, all but the poorest nomad families had ready access to meat. Farmers, on the other hand, had to trade for meat, cull animals from their relatively small herds, or wait for an animal to die in an accident. All these options were expensive, so it is not surprising to find that even a wealthy family like Tashi Khedrup's ate meat only sporadically. This also raises the real possibility that there may have been a sizable underclass of Tibetans, perhaps including the workers on Tashi Khedrup's estate, for whom meat was a rare luxury.

Similar patterns seem to have prevailed in many of Tibet's monasteries. There is little doubt that monks in many monasteries ate meat. Writing in the 1920s, for instance, Charles Bell noted that slaughterhouses were located adjacent to both Ramoche and Drepung monasteries in Lhasa, with "both yaks and sheep being killed for the food of the populace."[28] The presence of meat in monasteries, however, does not mean that all (or even most) monastics ate it regularly. As with farmers, many monks seem to have regarded meat as something of a luxury. Once again, evidence for this is provided in Tashi Khedrup's memoirs. Tashi Khedrup became a monk at Sera Monastery in Lhasa, and he recalls that while those monks who could afford it provided their own food, there were also many monks who could not, and had to rely on the monastery. "The poorer monks," he explains, "went [to the daily assembly] regularly, because of the meal of barley gruel that was served. On some special occasions, there would be a distribution of rice and meat."[29] Tashi Khedrup is clear that meat was an occasional treat at these daily prayer assemblies, even at a large, wealthy monastery like Sera. As with farmers, access to meat was largely determined by wealth, with poorer monks receiving it only on special occasions.

A similar situation could also be found at Tashi Chulong Monastery in Kham, far to the east of Lhasa. In his memoirs of his time as a child at this monastery in the 1940s, Naktsang Nulo recalls that he used to help the monks in the kitchen, carrying water, firewood, and so on. The kitchen monks became fond of him, and "when they poured my soup, they would always give me an extra piece of meat."[30] Naktsang Nulo's presentation here makes clear that meat was a common feature of the diet at this monastery, which was located in a largely nomadic region. Even here, however, meat was not the primary food, so that Naktsang Nulo took it as a great kindness when the kitchen monks gave him an extra piece or two of meat.

All these accounts date to the early twentieth century, but the presence of meat in Tibetan monasteries prior to this period is confirmed by the discussions of it often found in monastery rulebooks, known as *chayik* in Tibetan. As discussed in chapter 2 of this book, texts of this genre frequently seek to curtail, in one way or another, the amount of meat consumed by monks. We may recall Terdak Lingpa's 1689 *Rules and Regulations for Mindrolling Monastery*, where he asserts that, "while we do not absolutely implement a rule of vegetarianism, it is important that festivals and the like do not have lots of meat, and that meat is not the main basis of one's diet."[31] Unlike the Vinaya, monastic regulations such as this text do not claim to lay down rules for all monastics at all times, but are written to address issues found at particular monasteries at particular times. As Berthe Jansen explains, "These texts document situations that were seen by the authors as problematic. In many monastic guidelines, new rules are introduced by first noting how certain issues were dealt with wrongly in the past, and how 'from now on' people need to behave or manage the monastery differently."[32] When texts of this genre seek to restrict meat consumption, therefore, it is not a theoretical discussion: the author presumably felt that the monks or nuns of the monastery in question were eating too much meat.

These texts do not tell us exactly how much meat these monks consumed, nor whether they ate it on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis. Indeed, when combined with Tashi Khedrup and Naktsang Nulo's more recent recollections, we may speculate that meat may not have been a daily staple and that the amount any particular monk or nun may have eaten may have been largely determined by their relative wealth. That said, the monasteries discussed here all come from distinct regions, lineages, and economic platforms. Taken as a group, therefore, the accounts presented here do suggest that meat was a part of monastic diets in a variety of contexts, worthy of concern on the part of those who regulated monastic conduct.

In addition to any meat that was eaten as part of a regular diet, there is also some evidence that meat was particularly consumed during festivals. As part of his broader criticism of monks whose demand for meat provides the economic support for large numbers of butchers, Shabkar notes that monasteries particularly sought out meat during festivals: "When monastery officials tell [patrons] that they have a big festival coming, the [patrons] buy twenty or thirty sheep from the nomads, killing them in the autumn. This is a common occurrence in both large monasteries and small ones."[33] To Shabkar, this is yet one more example of monks acting badly by inducing their patrons to slaughter animals for them. For us, however, it suggests that meat may have been more common at festival times than at other times. Such a pattern continues to suggest that meat was something special, a valuable addition to a diet that otherwise relied heavily on tsampa and dairy.

Some monasteries also actively participated in the economy that surrounded animal husbandry, owning land and herds of livestock. Smaller monasteries presumably owned smaller herds, but some large monasteries owned many thousands of animals, representing a significant portion of the monastery's wealth.[34] I have found no evidence that these monastery-owned animals were treated any differently than other animals in Tibet. They were milked for butter and cheese, sheared for wool, and slaughtered for their meat. These herds were a functional piece of the monastic economy, a crucial source of both food and goods for trade. Once again, Tashi Khedrup's remarkable memoirs provide a good example of this. He recalls that following the death of his patron his position in the monastery became somewhat precarious, and that he was sent out for two years to assist the families that tended the monastery's livestock. He notes, though only in passing, that some of the monastery's animals were slaughtered at the onset of winter, the same time most nomads would slaughter.[35] While the fact that Tashi Khedrup does not discuss the slaughter more extensively is unfortunate, it also points to the sheer normalcy of the monastery's interactions with its animals. In fact, throughout the ten pages he devotes to this period of his life, he never suggests that the monastery treated their herds any differently than a lay owner would have. They were simply part of the wealth of the monastic estate, to be used, cultivated, and, when necessary, slaughtered for meat.

As this suggests, both monasteries and secular communities often took a practical approach to their herds. This does not mean, however, that these communities were unaware of the religious critiques surrounding slaughter and meat eating. Indeed, concern over the karmic repercussions of their lifestyle seems to have been widespread in nomadic communities, and several scholars report that those nomads who could afford it would hire others to do their slaughtering for them, believing that this would distance them from the karmic results of the killing.[36] As discussed extensively in chapter 2 of this book, many lamas were highly critical of this practice, arguing that the karma of the act of killing falls equally on all who participate.[37] While trying to distance oneself from the act of slaughter in this way may be at odds with normative expressions of Buddhist ethics, it does reflect the degree to which these nomads were aware of religious critiques of slaughter. They may have felt unable to avoid the killing entirely, but they could do what they could to minimize its karmic impact.

Despite this recognition of its problematic moral status, meat continued to be seen as an important part of a normal diet across the plateau. This does not mean, of course, that it was a primary, or even a significant, source of nutrition for all Tibetans. As this chapter has amply demonstrated, the quantity of meat people ate would have varied widely by time, place, lifestyle, and wealth. Some Tibetans ate quite a lot of meat. Others, particularly poorer farmers and monks, may have eaten very little. In many (perhaps most) contexts, meat does not seem to have been as important as tsampa. Despite the wide variation in the quantity of meat any individual might eat, however, the conscious decision to give up meat remained quite rare. Even those poor farmers and monks for whom meat was only an occasional luxury continued to see it as desirable, and would, presumably, have eaten more of it if they were able. Broadly speaking, meat seems to have been understood as an important part of the diet, a valuable supplement to tsampa and dairy. Adopting vegetarianism, therefore, entailed the conscious rejection of an important dietary staple and was not an option to be undertaken lightly.

Meat and Human Health

This sense that meat remained necessary, despite its acknowledged moral problems, was largely based on the widespread view that a vegetarian diet was unhealthy. This view is supported by the Tibetan medical tradition, which used specific meats as medicines and which viewed meat as an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. Perhaps more important, the idea that meat is necessary for human health also extended beyond the sphere of formal medicine, so that many people assumed that vegetarianism would lead to weakness and, possibly, illness and premature death. Even staunch advocates for vegetarianism often admitted that their diet was unhealthy and allowed those who were old, ill, or otherwise infirm to eat meat.

Formal Medicine

Tibet hosts a unique and sophisticated medical tradition, founded primarily on Indian Ayurvedic medical theory, but with significant contributions from Chinese medicine as well. Tibetan doctors built on this basis, creatively integrating theoretical reflection with the practical knowledge that came from clinical and experimental experience.[38] By the seventeenth century, this system was supported by a network of specialized teaching colleges that disseminated formal medical instruction across the plateau.[39] According to the theory espoused by these doctors, the body contains three humors: *béken*, *lung*, and *tripa*, often glossed in English as "phlegm," "wind," and "bile." When these humors are balanced, a person experiences good physical health; when they are out of balance, illness results.[40] The type of illness a person experiences is, to a large extent, governed by the particular imbalance in their humors. If the wind humor is unbalanced, for instance, a person may feel weak or dizzy. Tibetan medicine is, to a large degree, the art and science of diagnosing and correcting any such imbalances. To do so, doctors employ a variety of diagnostic tools, including pulse analysis, urinalysis, physical examinations, and interviews. Once the imbalance has been identified, it can be remedied through the use of a wide range of medicines, as well as changing one's behavior and diet.[41]

Tibetan medicine has a rich literary heritage, but its most foundational work is the *Four Tantras*.[42] This collection of four texts (which, despite their titles, are not tantras in the customary sense) is purported to have been written by the medical Buddha, but most contemporary scholars (and some early Tibetan commentators) agree that it was composed by Yutok Yönten Gönpo in the twelfth century.[43] Shortly after it was written, the *Four Tantras* came to be seen as the central work in the Tibetan medical canon. It has been the subject of many commentaries, though Desi Sangyé Gyatso's seventeenth-century *Blue Beryl* deserves a special mention. While Sangyé Gyatso's commentary eventually became the standard interpretation, the *Four Tantras* itself remained the foundational touchstone of Tibetan medicine. It articulates the basic theories of medical practice, including the workings of the three humors. Importantly, however, the *Four Tantras* is also a practical guidebook for the implementation of that theory, containing recipes for various types of medicine, reflections on different lifestyles, and so on. Among these are several important discussions of meat.

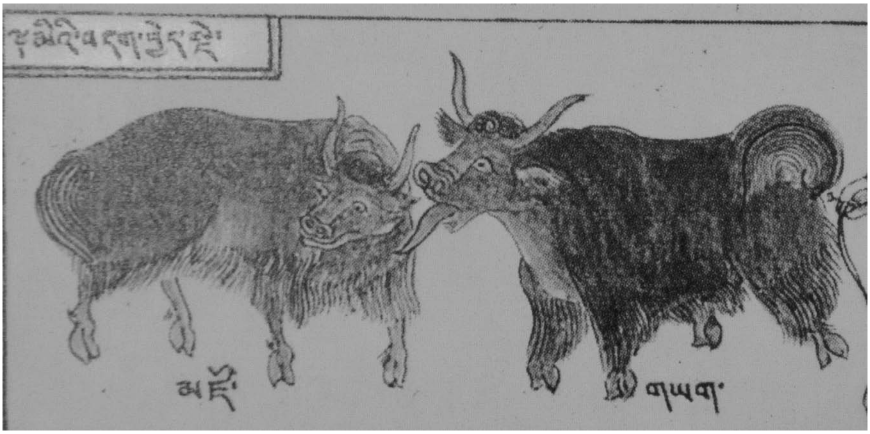


FIGURE 5.1 Depiction of edible animals, from a copy of a seventeenth-century medical painting. Yuri Parfionovitch, Fernand Meyer, and Gyurmé Dorje, eds., *Tibetan Medical Paintings: Illustrations to the Blue Beryl Treatise of Sangye Gyamtso (1653–1705)*, 2 vols. (London: Serinda, 1992), 1:86. Used with permission.

In these passages, the *Four Tantras* frequently associates specific meats with specific medicinal results. "Dog tongue heals wounds," for instance, while "donkey tongue ends diarrhea."[44] These are just two examples of the many types of meat (and other animal products) that are ascribed specific medicinal value. In other passages, the medicinal value of different types of meat are determined by the animals' habitats or other shared characteristics. Thus, the *Four Tantras* explains, "The meat of animals that dwell on dry land has cool, light and rough qualities. It clears the wind and phlegm disorders associated with heat. The meat of animals living in wet places has oily, heavy and warm qualities. They clear disorders of the stomach, kidneys and waist, cold disorders, and wind disorders."[45] Again, this is only one of many examples of the way the *Four Tantras* categorizes and presents the medicinal value of certain meats.

As useful as they were for doctors, however, these discussions of the use of exotic meats as medicine need to be distinguished from questions regarding the medical value of normal, day-to-day meats like mutton, goat, and yak. While Tibetans may have consumed dog or donkey tongue for medicinal reasons, I feel safe assuming that few relied on these meats as a major part of their diet. Fortunately, the *Four Tantras* also has things to say about the qualities of everyday meat. Mutton, it claims, "has oily and warm qualities. It increases strength and supports bodily constituents. It clears wind and phlegm disorders and supports the appetite."[46] Yak meat also "has oily and warm qualities," but it "clears cold [diseases] and increases blood and bile."[47] These are the meats that most Tibetans would have eaten every day, and they too are given specific medical benefits. Notably, mutton is associated with building strength, but yak is not. As I show momentarily, this distinction was sometimes lost on a popular audience.

Throughout, in fact, the *Four Tantras* is usually quite specific in its discussion of meat, associating specific meats with specific healing qualities. However, this is not always the case, and in at least a few passages, it discusses the use of meat as a broad category. In one important passage, for instance, the *Four Tantras* advises, "To support the physical strength of a child, the elderly, . . . and those with a weak body, administer meat soup, grain soup, and clarified butter with either honey or molasses. It is easy to digest and is the best way to build strength without decreasing appetite."[48] As I discuss below, this passage aligns closely with popular perceptions of the role of meat in human health: meat is presented as a broad category and is associated with physical strength. Despite this passage, the overall impression given by the discussion of meat in the *Four Tantras* is one of specificity and detail, where particular meats are ascribed particular medicinal qualities. Based on these specifics, a well-trained doctor can prescribe particular medicines or changes in diet in order to treat a patient's illness and return her or him to health.

Importantly for our discussion here, the *Four Tantras* contains no discussion of any ethical issues surrounding the use of meat as a form of medicine. The text as a whole is presented as a Mahāyāna Buddhist scripture and asks that its readers strive to benefit all sentient beings; as discussed in chapter 3, this is a category that explicitly includes animals. A good doctor should, we might reasonably infer, be concerned with whether or not his practice harms sentient beings. And yet the main body of the work itself does not mention the fact that the various meats it is prescribing must be harvested from the corpses of dead animals. As Catherine Schuetze has noted, neither Yutok Yönten Gönpo nor Desi Sangyé Gyatso appear to have perceived a contradiction between the *Four Tantras*' support of the bodhisattva ideal and its use of meat-based medicine.[49]

Despite the rhetoric about benefiting *all* sentient beings, therefore, the *Four Tantras* (and the Tibetan medical tradition more broadly) strongly privileges questions of *human* suffering. The focus is on maintaining human health, and that need outweighs most concerns over harming animals. The Tibetan tradition does not distinguish, as a matter of kind, between humans and animals. Both are sentient beings. But this does not mean that human and animal suffering is entirely equivalent. As the medical tradition exemplifies, human well-being is privileged over animal well-being, and it is sometimes acceptable to do things that harm animals if they benefit humans.

It is also worth noting that the medical tradition is not the only textual tradition that acknowledges meat's medicinal value. We may recall from chapter 2 that the Vinaya, the formal rules for monks and nuns, has a somewhat ambiguous relationship with meat eating. It allows it, but only under certain circumstances. One such circumstance is when a monk or nun is ill. In such cases they (or their caretaker) are allowed to specifically ask a donor to give them meat, a request that is ordinarily forbidden.[50] While the text makes no mention of what kinds of disease the meat is able to treat, it does provide canonical authority to the idea that meat is a legitimate form of medicine. As with the Tibetan medical tradition, human health trumps other concerns.

Popular Perspectives

This attitude, that meat is a necessary component of human health, is prominent in the Tibetan medical tradition, but it also spread well beyond the formal confines of medical practice. Whether they were building on the ideas found in Tibetan medicine or other, perhaps even older, cultural assumptions, most pre-communist Tibetans appear to have assumed that without meat a person would be weak, feeble, and generally unhealthy. Even those who otherwise supported vegetarianism often admitted that although a meat-free diet was morally upstanding, it was not healthy.

There is ample evidence for this in Tibetan literature, but before turning to these textual sources I would like to relate a story told to me by Tenzin, an interlocutor from the Ngaba region of Kham.[51] While this is a contemporary account, it neatly encapsulates many of the issues involved in these debates, expressing a vision of meat that would have been familiar to many Tibetans over the centuries. Tenzin was a young man in his early twenties, and his father had been a vegetarian for many years. A few years before we met, his father was diagnosed with cancer. As the disease ran its course, a Tibetan doctor advised that eating meat would extend his life, but he refused, despite his family's entreaties. Tenzin's father died, and although the young man did not blame vegetarianism for his father's cancer, he did believe that if his father had consented to eat meat it would have built up his strength, extending (though probably not saving) his life. In Tenzin's understanding, there was a clear correlation between eating meat and building physical strength, a correlation that was confirmed by his father's Tibetan doctor. Tenzin was willing to acknowledge the moral superiority of his father's diet, but remained resentful of such a diet, feeling that his father had chosen vegetarianism over more time with his family.

Like Tenzin's father, the twelfth-century master Jigten Sumgön was a long-term vegetarian, having adopted the diet when he took monastic ordination. His *Biography* recalls that when he grew older, he became ill with a cough. At that point, "a broth made of the dried and powdered lungs of a northern yak was prepared in order to help his cough, but he refused it."[52] Jigten Sumgön died soon after. This particular biography was written by Sherab Yungné, a direct disciple. And while it certainly holds up Jigten Sumgön's vegetarianism as an ideal, the tone of the text also betrays a level of resentment, as if Sherab Yungné wishes that his master had prolonged his life by accepting the medicine.

Not everyone, of course, made the same choice as Jigten Sumgön or Tenzin's father. In a brief but telling story in her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro recalls that, in 1921, when she was twenty-nine years old, she fell seriously ill with an imbalance of the wind humor. Sera Khandro had been vegetarian for many years, but at that point her teacher insisted that she eat meat to build her strength, specifically blessing some for her use. Sera Khandro consented, "consuming a little of that food, with the thought that it was for the sake of her illness."[53] This blessed, medicinal meat helped Sera Khandro recover her strength, and she was eventually able to return to a vegetarian diet.

For his part, Shabkar Tsokdrük Rangdröl carved out a medical exception to his otherwise uncompromising vegetarianism. Shabkar was a deeply committed vegetarian, arguably the most adamant critic of meat in all Tibetan literature.[54] And yet, in his mid-nineteenth-century *Nectar of Immortality*, he explicitly allows meat for those who are "ill, physically exhausted, and close to death, so that if they do not eat a little meat they will die."[55] For Shabkar, this applies not only to cases of acute illness, but also to advanced age. "If great masters have a long life," he notes, "there will be great benefit for both the teachings and beings. When they grow old, therefore, it is necessary [to eat meat] in order to heal the wind humor."[56] In short, Shabkar concludes that in some cases, the medical advantages of meat outweigh its negatives.

While Shabkar allows meat to be consumed as medicine, this does not mean that he finds it acceptable under normal circumstances, even if someone appeals to health as an excuse. A few pages before he allows meat in cases of true medical need, his *Nectar of Immortality* notes that some people argue that *all* monks should eat meat in order to keep up their strength.[57] Shabkar has no tolerance for this view, criticizing those who advocate this position: "It's not enough that they eat it themselves. They also advocate it to others in formal exposition and informal conversation. On the issue of food, it's like they're advised by demons!"[58]

Ultimately, Shabkar advocates a position where a willingness to allow meat in cases of genuine medical need is coupled with an insistence that this does not permit the indiscriminate consumption of flesh on a daily basis. Importantly, this view accepts that meat has genuine medicinal value, particularly in its ability to support the wind humor and physical strength in already vulnerable groups, such as the sick and elderly. In taking this stance, Shabkar adopts the widely held view that eating meat specifically supports the development of physical strength. Interestingly, this popular perception of meat is not quite the same as that found in the *Four Tantras*. There, different meats are given different medicinal qualities. Mutton, the *Four Tantras* claim, "increases strength and supports bodily constituents. It clears wind and phlegm disorders and supports the appetite."[59] Yak, on the other hand, "clears cold [diseases] and increases blood and bile."[60] Outside the medical profession, however, many of these subtleties seem to have gotten lost. Instead, meat, understood as a single, broad category, is associated primarily with bodily strength and keeping the wind humor in balance.

We have already seen this position in Shabkar's writings, but it is hardly unique to him. In his fifteenth-century *Biography of Ngorchen Künga Zangpo*, for instance, Muchen Könchok Gyeltsen notes that Ngorchen adhered to both strict vegetarianism and the practice of not eating after noon. "Because he chose to hold firm to this," Muchen notes, "his body was very weak."[61] Muchen was Ngorchen's disciple and heir and, like Ngorchen, adhered to a strict vegetarian diet.[62] It is safe to say, therefore, that he was not opposed to vegetarianism, even though he clearly believed it had negative health consequences.

The early twentieth-century Bön master Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen takes this a step further. His *Faults of Meat* recounts, at length and in great detail, many reasons a person should avoid meat. It causes animals to suffer, results in terrible karma, and is simply disgusting. After noting all of meat's faults, however, Shardza abruptly changes direction:

> At the same time, however, the Buddha is the extraordinary support for practice, and this free and favored human life is difficult to obtain.[63] Eating meat supports long life, making it necessary for obtaining the supreme objective. If you do not eat it, your bodily strength will be feeble, you will not be able to perform virtue, and your life force will be weak, as if you had a wind disorder.[64]

Shardza clearly sees vegetarianism as the morally correct option. This positive evaluation of vegetarianism, however, is countered by the fact that he sees meat as necessary in order to have sufficient strength to practice the Dharma. Shardza tries to resolve this dilemma by advocating the consumption of meat that has died a natural death (a point I return to in chapter 7).

This dilemma, in fact, was not limited to Shardza, but was common to most commentators on the question of meat eating. Most followed the medical tradition and popular perception in assuming that eating meat was healthy, and that vegetarianism was not. The question, then, was whether meat's health benefits outweighed its negatives. For some Tibetans, meat simply wasn't worth it. Most of the vegetarians I have surveyed in this book would fall into this category. Like Shabkar, these figures do not necessarily dispute meat's medicinal value, but they do not think that value outweighs the suffering and harm meat eating inflicts on animals. For many others (probably most, in fact) meat was important enough to human health that other considerations should be set aside. Shardza is a great example of this position, with his nuanced understanding of the faults of meat combined with an unwillingness to actually give it up. Furthermore, it seems likely that this belief in the medical necessity of eating meat extended well beyond such elite authors. There is little direct evidence for popular attitudes toward meat, but given the fact that even authors who supported vegetarianism accepted that it was unhealthy, it seems reasonable to assume that most other Tibetans did as well.

A Necessary Evil

This idea that meat is medically necessary directly contributed to the idea that although meat was opposed to religious ideals, it was nevertheless an important part of life—a necessary evil. We have already seen several examples of this attitude. Shardza, we may recall, argued explicitly that while meat was morally corrupt, it was necessary because avoiding it depleted a practitioner's strength. Another intriguing reference to this idea comes from *The Marvelous Gem-Like Vision*, Nesar Tashi Chöphel's addendum to Jamgön Kongtrül's *Autobiography*. Kongtrül, one of the most important religious leaders of the late nineteenth century, never adopted vegetarianism. In Nesar Tashi Chöphel's depiction, however, Kongtrül was conflicted about his diet. "Again and again," he recalls, "I myself heard [Kongtrül] pray, 'May I be born in a place where I do not need to eat meat.' "[65] In this prayer, Kongtrül seems to acknowledge that meat is less than ideal, but his phrasing implies that in his current situation, meat was unavoidably necessary.

Perhaps the simplest and most eloquent expression of this idea—that meat is a necessary evil—can be found in the *Autobiography* of Orgyen Chökyi, a nun who lived in what is now Nepal in the first decades of the eighteenth century. In this work, Orgyen Chökyi presents a moving depiction of her relationship with meat:

> Taking a mother goat's milk from the mouth of her kid,
> My mind is sad, but I need the milk.
> Set in this human life, I need milk.
> Goat curd is delicious on the tongue, but it is sinful food.
> I sit on a goat-leather seat, but it is a sinful seat.
> A goat-leather coat wraps my back, but it is a sinful coat.
> Goat butter moistens my food, but it is sinful butter.
> When I put goat's meat in my mouth, my mind is sad.
> But set in this human life, I need food.[66]

Orgyen Chökyi worked with animals throughout her life and, as this passage demonstrates, had an acute awareness of the suffering that her needs inflicted on them. Despite this awareness, however, she never adopted vegetarianism, or even seems to have contemplated it. For her, and presumably countless other Tibetans, meat was a sinful but unavoidable part of human life.

Importantly, this position recognizes and acknowledges the validity of religious arguments against meat. Shardza, Kongtrül, and Orgyen Chökyi do not attempt to argue that meat is somehow not sinful. Indeed, its sinful nature is assumed and explicitly acknowledged. But this recognition of meat's sinfulness was set against a perception in which giving up meat had serious negative consequences. Individual Tibetans had to navigate this tension. Most, as I have shown, felt that meat's value outweighed its downsides. Even the minority who normally saw the downsides of eating meat as more significant than any benefits could change their minds under specific circumstances, such as illness or old age. Other special circumstances could be more prosaic, as when Shabkar allows travellers on long journeys to eat meat when other food is not available.[67] Such situations altered the balance between meat's health advantages and moral problems.

Often, concerns over vegetarianism were themselves expressed in religious terms: in order to fulfill other, higher obligations a person might be required to do something otherwise sinful, such as eat meat. This can be seen clearly in Shardza's approach to meat. For him, meat is necessary for human health, which, in turn, is necessary to practice religion fully. As he says in his *Faults of Meat*, "If you do not eat [meat], your bodily strength will be feeble, you will not be able to perform virtue, and your life force will be weak, as if you had a wind disorder. If you do not rely on a skillful method like this, you are throwing away your body. It is said to be a fault similar to tearing down the four supporting pillars in a temple."[68] In making this argument, Shardza takes the old discussion of whether the medicinal value of meat outweighs its sinfulness and gives it religious overtones. It's not just an individual's health at risk, but her or his ability to practice the Dharma.

While vegetarianism's perceived difficulty was a strong obstacle to the spread of the diet, it is also worth noting that this same idea was sometimes seen as a positive. In particular, adopting vegetarianism could bolster an individual's religious legitimacy in the eyes of peers and sponsors, precisely because it was so strongly believed to harm someone's health. This point has already been discussed in chapter 2, where I noted that vegetarianism, associated with the renunciatory ideal but not actually required by the Vinaya, could bolster a monk's reputation, publicly demonstrating his commitment to religious practice.

A similar principle operates here, where vegetarianism was widely seen as morally virtuous, but also difficult, austere, and potentially damaging to one's health. Adopting such a diet, therefore, publicly demonstrated that an individual felt that religion was more important than health or other concerns.

Conclusion

At this point, it may sound like meat was widely seen as a disagreeable, but unfortunately necessary, part of the diet. Something akin to a bitter, unpleasant medicine. And it is likely that some Tibetans saw meat in precisely this way. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that almost all Tibetans agreed that meat was not bitter at all, but actually very tasty. Meat may have been seen as morally questionable in one way or another, but eating it was also a pleasant experience. This understanding of meat as a tasty object of desire was not limited to meat eaters; just as most vegetarians accepted meat's medicinal value, most also accepted without question the fact that meat tastes good. This fact upset the ethical calculations surrounding the understanding of meat as a necessary evil. There was always the possibility—even likelihood—that an individual might choose to eat meat not after sober reflection on its value for human health, but simply because it tasted good. Further, an individual might invoke the idea that meat is necessary in an attempt to justify, to themselves and others, a diet that they found too pleasant to give up.

Tibetan thinkers were well aware of this possibility, and many of them qualify their discussions of meat's necessity with strong admonitions to guard against eating meat out of simple desire. As I have already shown, Shabkar accepts that if someone is old, infirm, or truly ill then it is acceptable to consume some meat as a form of medicine. At the same time, however, he reflects, "If someone's wind energy is so powerful that they are unable to give up meat, then they should reflect on the faults of meat and abandon all craving for its taste."[69] While he allows meat when there is a genuine medical need, Shabkar is careful to separate this from meat eaten out of desire, without reflection.

Shabkar's insistence that need be separated from desire points to how deeply embedded the idea that meat is a necessary evil was in pre-communist Tibet. For most Tibetans, meat was simply a necessary part of a normal diet. They may not have eaten it on a daily basis, but it remained an important part of the ideal diet, understood to be necessary for optimal health. Without it, an individual would weaken physically and become susceptible to illness. In many ways, the basic question individuals had to decide was whether they privileged Buddhistic morality or health. Some chose to privilege religious concerns and relinquished meat. Many more chose to err on the side of health and physical well-being. This view of meat as a necessary evil, therefore, proved to be a strong impediment to the widespread adoption of vegetarianism in pre-communist Tibet.

This discussion, however, assumes that everyone involved subscribed to a Buddhist model of morality. It is Buddhistic morality, after all, that provides the “evil” in the depiction of meat as a necessary evil. But despite the importance of Buddhism in Tibetan culture, not all Tibetans wholly subscribed to such a Buddhistic ideal. In the next chapter, I look at those aspects of Tibetan culture that saw meat not as a necessary evil but as a positive good. In this vision, meat is not problematic at all. Instead, it is something to celebrate.

SIX

A Positive Good

OVER THE PAST FIVE CHAPTERS, I have described a situation in which vegetarianism is seen as a virtuous, if difficult, diet. It was frequently praised by religious leaders, while those who ate meat often expressed regret over their need to do so. In this perspective, meat should either be rejected entirely, or, at a minimum, regarded as a necessary evil. The virtuous nature of vegetarianism, however, is based entirely on a Buddhist model of morality that promotes compassion as the highest ideal. But while Buddhism was (and remains) a powerful force in Tibetan society, other perspectives were also present, and these were not always favorable toward vegetarianism.

Tibet has often been portrayed as a kind of Buddhist paradise, a utopian land thoroughly infused with the Buddhist ideals of wisdom and compassion. Perhaps the most famous articulation of this vision is found in James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, the 1933 novel that introduced the world to an imaginary place known as Shangri-La.[1] Hilton was not the first to set an adventure novel in a romanticized version of Tibet, but his depiction of a land where everyone was peaceful and happy under the benevolent dictatorship of enlightened religious masters struck a chord with Western audiences. The connection between Tibet and the fictional notion of Shangri-La remains so strong that the county of Zhongdian, in modern China's Yunnan province, renamed itself "Shangri-La County" in 2001, seeking—successfully—to attract more tourists.[2] More than eighty years after *Lost Horizon* was published, its depiction of Tibet as an enlightened, peaceful, Buddhist society continues to permeate popular visions of Tibet.

Such visions are, of course, false. While Buddhism influenced many aspects of Tibetan culture, other perspectives and ideas were also present. Despite Buddhism's opposition to killing, for instance, warfare and feuding were widespread on the plateau, and some individuals and communities took great pride in their military prowess.[3] This pride drew not on Buddhistic ideals, but on an alternate model that idealized skill at arms and physical strength. Another, more subtle, instance of competing cultural models can be seen in Tibet's flourishing medical culture. As Janet Gyatso has recently shown, some aspects of Tibetan medical culture varied from the model established by Tibetan religious scholarship. Gyatso notes that by the sixteenth century some Tibetan doctors operated from a position that prioritized empirical knowledge, gained from direct experience with sick patients, over theoretical knowledge, gained from the study of scripture. Unlike many Buddhist masters, doctors evaluated the received, scriptural tradition against their practical experience and were willing to publicly critique the texts when they felt they were wrong.[4] The result, Gyatso argues, is a mentality that is more scientific than scholastic.[5]

Gyatso terms this orientation the "medical mindset," suggesting a collection of perspectives and ideals that, as a whole, characterize the theory and practice of medicine in Tibet. In this chapter, I identify two other alternate mindsets that were widespread in pre-communist Tibet and that were particularly important to the question of meat eating. These cultural schemas—one that privileges wealth and another that privileges heroic masculinity—approached the question of meat eating very differently than the Buddhist texts and authors this book has focused on so far. Those influenced by these perspectives saw meat not as a necessary evil, but as a wholesome aspect of a well-lived life, to be enjoyed whenever possible. Such a stance was in direct tension with the Buddhistic view of meat as sinful and was a powerful force militating against the adoption of vegetarianism. In the end, I argue that debates over vegetarianism in pre-communist Tibet were located at the center of a complex tension, with Buddhist concerns over animal suffering opposed by medical assumptions as well as alternate mindsets that understood meat in a positive light.

By pointing to this tension I am not suggesting that individuals had to choose either one approach or another. For most Tibetans, navigating the tension between these various perspectives meant incorporating all of them, though to varying degrees. Those whose primary allegiance was to Buddhist ideals might adopt vegetarianism or at least see meat as a necessary evil. Others, drawing more strongly on either the economic or masculine perspectives discussed in this chapter, saw meat in largely positive terms, though this may have been tinged at times with some Buddhist regret. Deciding to eat meat was never a simple question of contrasting religious morality with perceived medical need. Instead, it involved the careful balancing of Buddhist ethics, medical need, and allegiance to alternate ideals that promoted meat as a positive part of a life well lived.

Cultivating Wealth

The first of these alternate orientations focuses on the cultivation and display of wealth. In this model, success is not measured in terms of karma, realization, or other Buddhist values. Instead, it prioritizes such worldly values as having children (particularly sons), making money, and advancing socially. Such values were seen as valid and reasonable within their own contexts, but could also conflict with the renunciatory ideal promoted by Buddhism. Meat was one such instance. While religious perspectives largely condemned meat eating, this economic orientation understood it to be positive, a means of both developing and displaying wealth.

A telling account of this perspective can be seen in the *Four Tantras*, the foundational medical text discussed in the previous chapter. While this text contains discussions of Buddhistic morality, Janet Gyatso has shown that it also features a detailed presentation of various strategies a young physician should follow in order to boost his career. These strategies, glossed under the term *michö*, or "human dharma," include advice on how to pick patients (look for rich ones), how much to charge them (as much as you can get away with), and, tellingly, how to phrase your diagnosis in such a way that if the patient gets well you get the credit, but if they die, you are not blamed.[6] As presented in the *Four Tantras*, the aim of medical practice was not only to heal patients but also to create a thriving career, with the wealth and social status that went along with it. As Gyatso puts it, "It is clear that being skilled in human dharma is about looking good and achieving a position of prestige."[7] Importantly, while this path is distinct from the religious path, it remains "upstanding and respectable on its own terms."[8]

Similar points are raised in *Advice on the Two Ethics,* a short work by the early eighteenth-century master Jigmé Trinlé Özer, the first Dodrubchen Rinpoché. As the title of this work suggests, Dodrubchen distinguishes two distinct ethical spheres: the religious and the worldly. When he dispenses advice on worldly life, Dodrubchen begins with the cultivation of business ties and wealth, suggesting that, "if you are friends with powerful people, your desires will be accomplished."[9] In Dodrubchen's analysis, worldly success is achieved through the skillful manipulation of relationships, all with the goal of growing one's wealth.

Dodrubchen does not stop there, however, recognizing that success is not simply about money, but is also concerned with the social status that wealth could convey. He is, therefore, concerned with appropriate ways to display one's wealth, suggesting, "Do not wear out your fine clothes at home, but wear them in public."[10] Rich, silken robes, in Dodrubchen's analysis, are a status symbol. If you wear them out at home, where others will not see you, their value will have been wasted. Worldly life entails competing for wealth and prestige, and Dodrubchen encourages his readers to go at it as skillfully as possible. Importantly, Dodrubchen never condemns this worldly, economic orientation. Indeed, his goal is not to discredit such a life but to suggest ways in which it can be lived most fully and effectively. Like the medical mindset Gyatso discusses, the goals of this economic orientation are distinct from the Buddhist ideal (the other of Dodrubchen's "two ethics"), but it is nevertheless a valid perspective in and of itself. For both Dodrubchen and the *Four Tantras*, the economic orientation, with all its worldly priorities, was a valid and respectable way to approach one's life.

This is not to suggest that the worldly and religious paths never intersect. As Gyatso has pointed out, the *Four Tantras* also contains a discussion of Buddhistic morality and, in the end, suggests that doctors follow a mixture of the two paths. In this unified approach, "instrumental virtues that promote one's career are mixed with a compassionate and selfless concern for the weak, making for a complex picture of a worldly, educated, and moral ideal."[11] Dodrubchen takes a similar position, making clear that individuals should behave honestly when they cultivate wealth, paying close attention to the karmic consequences of their actions. The emphasis on the worldly life and economic goals found in these works, therefore, should not be read as a complete rejection of Buddhist ideals, merely a recognition that these ideals were not the only perspective worth considering.

While religious and worldly orientations could overlap, it is also clear that these two paths could sometimes conflict, and meat eating was one such issue. In this debate, worldly priorities—valid and acceptable in their own context—conflict with Buddhistic priorities. The goals of the economic orientation focus largely on the creation of wealth, and animal products were often part of that project, particularly in nomadic communities. While Tibetan nomads have sometimes been described as self-sufficient, the reality is that they depended on a complex economic network for their survival.[12] Like other Tibetan communities, after all, tsampa was a main staple of the nomadic diet, even though most nomads did not grow barley themselves. In order to obtain tsampa and other requisites, nomads had to trade with settled farming communities.[13] Some of these commodities did not require killing. Butter, for instance, was a key trade item for many nomads,[14] as was wool.[15] In the mid-twentieth century, yak tails were another valued trade commodity, ultimately used in the production of Santa Claus beards.[16] Other nomadic communities had access to natural resources such as salt or medicinal plants, and traded these for tsampa and other items that they could not produce themselves.[17]

In addition to these nonlethal resources, however, nomads also sold their animals for meat. Robert B. Ekvall, an American missionary and ethnographer active in Amdo prior to the Second World War, notes that this trade was an important part of the nomadic economy. Sometimes this trade was ad hoc, as when a traveller might purchase an individual sheep for personal consumption.[18] At other times it was a well-organized annual event, as when nomads drove herds of animals over long distances to trade them to farming communities. Such trade was primarily conducted with Tibetan farmers, but in some cases the animals reached meat markets as far away as China.[19] These trips were undertaken in the late fall, after barley had been harvested by farmers but before winter conditions in the highlands caused the animals to lose weight. Ekvall presents such trips as a typical part of nomadic life, and notes that they could last from only a few days to over a month, depending on how far the nomads had to travel.[20]

Nor was Ekvall the only observer to note annual drives like these. Writing about Lhasa in the 1920s, Charles Bell also notes that nomads would drive their herds to market in the fall. Near Drepung Monastery, for instance, he reports a village that "consists mainly of houses rented for two or three weeks to nomads from the north, who bring cattle and sheep for sale."[21] The fact that nomads would rent these buildings for weeks at a time suggests that these were significant journeys, likely involving caravans similar to those Ekvall describes. For his part, Paul Sherab, a well-travelled Tibetan who described Tibetan life to the Englishman G. A. Combe in the 1920s, also mentions nomads driving their animals to market on an annual basis. In a nomadic region west of Lhasa, for instance, he claims that "annually in the autumn they go down to Dölung Tsurbu lamasery [i.e., Tsurpu Monastery, the seat of the Karmapa lineage] and trade their yak, sheep, and dried meat for wheat and barley."[22] As these accounts illustrate, exchanging meat (either dried or in the form of live animals) for tsampa was a regular part of the nomadic economy.

The central role of animals in the economic life of the plateau is reflected in the widespread use of the Tibetan term *nor* to refer to both individual animals and herds. *Nor* literally means "wealth," and in other contexts can refer to gold or silver. For many Tibetans across the plateau, however, the term was also used to refer to animals. It was these animals that constituted the primary measure of an individual, family, or monastery's wealth. The Bön master Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen highlights this usage in the depiction of the slaughtering process found in his *Faults of Meat*. Here, Shardza provides a step-by-step accounting of the mental process that leads someone to kill one of their yaks. The first step in this process, he suggests, is to think, "These yaks are a herd of *nor*."[23] Shardza aims to critique this thought, arguing that by taking a living thing and reducing it to the status of *nor*, an individual is profoundly misinterpreting the nature of that animal. Through this critique, however, Shardza also points to the degree to which many Tibetans understood their animals as their *nor*, their wealth. Pointedly, in order to realize its value as *nor*, Shardza's herder needs to kill the animal. Living animals were valuable, but Shardza's passage suggests that their meat was also a valuable commodity.

The fact that animals represented a herder's wealth does not mean that all herders followed the same economic strategies with regard to their animals. Goldstein and Beall report that some nomads were primarily interested in maximizing the size of their herds, slaughtering or selling animals as infrequently as possible. Others, however, "are eager to acquire the symbols of success and status . . . and are willing to trade or kill extra livestock to obtain these immediately, even though it cuts into their herd capital."[24] Ekvall describes a similar situation, reporting that Amdo nomads had to balance herd growth against immediate wealth, "Decisions deal with two options. The natural increase [i.e., newly born animals] may be preserved as a direct increment to the herd. . . . Or the natural increase itself or its substitutes—head for head, from the mature and old of the herd—may be either traded for wealth or butchered to furnish meat, animal fat and skins."[25] In a direct illustration of this dilemma, Ekvall mentions an incident when he himself had agreed to purchase a sheep from a nomad, only to have the nomad's wife intervene and insist that the long-term value of the animal's wool outweighed the price Ekvall was offering for its meat.[26] As this story illustrates, all nomads saw their animals as capital, but some preferred to expand their herds while others chose to capitalize on their immediate value.

Overall, then, animals were a primary measure of Tibetans' wealth, particularly among nomadic communities. And while some of that wealth could be realized through the sale of butter, wool, or other nonlethal products, a significant portion of it was tied up in the ability to sell an animal for meat. The economic orientation prioritized the cultivation of wealth, and managing one's herd—at least partly with an eye toward realizing the animals' value as meat—was an important means of doing so. In this perspective, therefore, meat carried largely positive connotations.

Beyond the simple cultivation of wealth, this economic perspective also involves the conspicuous display of that wealth to improve one's social position. Again, meat was (or at least could be) part of this process. As noted in the previous chapter, meat was usually more expensive than other foods. Consuming it in public, particularly in large quantities at important events, made a statement about someone's financial means. This tendency is evident in a striking passage in the nineteenth-century master Patrül Rinpoché's *Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Here, Patrül criticizes the practice, apparently common during his lifetime, of slaughtering many animals for weddings and other feasts. Patrül describes a stereotypical bride at such a wedding as a "red-faced demoness," who expects her hosts to constantly provide lots of meat.[27] "Countless sheep are killed when a woman is betrothed," Patrül says, "and at the time of the dowry and again when she is sent to her husband's house. Later, other animals are sure to be killed when she returns to visit her own family. If she is entertained by relatives or friends and they serve her any other food, then she expresses her displeasure by eating as if she didn't know how to chew."[28] Patrül's goal in this passage is to demonstrate the immorality of meat eating, but along the way he provides a glimpse into a popular culture wherein presenting a guest with a generous helping of meat is a conspicuous display of wealth. Serving meat demonstrates esteem for the bride, while failing to provide it insults her, prompting disparaging looks and comments.

A similar idea can be found in *My Tibetan Childhood*, the autobiography of Naktsang Nulo, a herder who lived through the tumultuous decades of the late twentieth century. Born in 1949, Naktsang Nulo provides a detailed account of his childhood on the grasslands of southern Amdo in a family that was well regarded and relatively wealthy. He recalls that "the old people said, 'These days the Naktsang family is flourishing and prosperous. They never stop eating meat, even in the summer months.' "[29] Many herding families ran out of meat by late spring, and the Naktsang family's ability to eat it through the summer is held up as proof of their wealth and prosperity.

This association between meat and economic success is not limited to recent centuries. Tibetan commentaries on the Vinaya, for instance, often present meat as an unseemly delicacy. This stance has its root in the canonical *Sūtra of Individual Liberation*, where meat, milk, yogurt, and butter are all classified as "delicacies" that a monk or nun may seek out only if he or she is ill.[30] Numerous Tibetan commentaries confirm that, in this context, the problem with these foods has nothing to do with any harm they cause to animals. To give only one example of many, the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé, says, "Now, to explain the fault of begging for delicacies. 'Delicacies' are whichever foods are said to be pleasing, such as milk, yogurt, butter, fish meat and dried meat. The fault is to delight in these."[31] Elsewhere in this same text, Mikyö Dorjé argues passionately against meat because of the harm it causes animals. Here, however, the concern is that if people see monastics begging for—or even just eating—delicacies such as these, they will start to see the Sangha as a community of gluttons. These commentaries are not as colorful as Patrül's portrayal of the demonic bride, but they reflect a similar dynamic: in many contexts, publicly consuming meat was a display of wealth, particularly if the type or quantity of meat clearly went beyond the needs of mere subsistence. In the renunciatory perspective of the monastic code, such a display is unseemly. Monks are expected to maintain a minimal level of asceticism, and eating lots of meat threatened that vision. In the perspective of the economic orientation, on the other hand, where the pursuit and display of wealth were accepted and even promoted, meat was useful. Like the expensive clothing Dodrubchen suggests should only be worn in public, providing one's guests a feast of delicious meats was a public display of wealth and status. Again, meat was seen as a good thing, contributing directly to a successful life. For those who had it, it was a display of wealth. For those who did not, it was aspirational, something to attain as proof that their situation had improved.

As discussed in the first five chapters of this book, Buddhist authors presented a range of attitudes toward meat eating, ranging from forbidding it outright to accepting that it is an unfortunate, but necessary, part of human life. Nowhere, however, do these authors claim that meat is a good thing. And yet from the economic perspective, meat was just that: a good and positive part of life. Raising and trading animals for meat directly contributed to the accumulation of wealth, and the conspicuous consumption of meat was a public display of that wealth. Buddhist authors might promote vegetarianism, but the values of this economic orientation pull in the opposite direction, positioning meat as a fully valid method for both cultivating and displaying wealth.

This is not to say, of course, that individuals had to choose between these competing perspectives. Many of those whose primary allegiance was to the cultivation and display of wealth were still influenced by Buddhistic concerns. Nomads sometimes preferred to hire others to do their killing for them, believing that this insulated them from the negative karma of the act of killing.[32] These nomads' concern over karmic consequences was not enough to stop them from ordering the death of their livestock, but it was powerful enough to get them to modify their practices, to the extent of paying someone to do their slaughtering for them. In the end, despite the best efforts of the many religious leaders who argued against meat eating, the tension between religious and economic ideals on this issue remained largely unresolved, and the economic orientation remained a powerful impediment to the spread of vegetarianism.

Heroic Masculinity

The second alternative approach I will address valorizes the strength and skills of the warrior, a perspective that I term "heroic masculinity."[33] Like the economic orientation, this perspective prioritizes worldly ideals, but rather than focusing on wealth, it idealizes a particular vision of masculinity in which the ideal figure is portrayed not as a monk or a wealthy businessman but as a powerful warrior, willing and able to vanquish opponents through physical violence. This ideal has exerted a powerful influence on Tibetan culture, and, once again, meat is viewed very differently in this perspective than in Buddhist ethical perspectives. Even more so than in the economic orientation, the heroic masculine perspective views meat as a good thing, an integral part of life that should be celebrated rather than condemned. This connection is so strong that some Tibetans felt that giving meat up was emasculating.

Traces of this ideal can be found in many aspects of Tibetan culture, but discussion of only a few points should suffice to give a general outline of this vision of heroic masculinity. A good place to begin involves horses and horsemanship. Tibet had few roads prior to the 1950s, and horses were a vital means of transport, especially for nomads or others who lived or travelled beyond their village. For many Tibetans, however, horses were more than a practical tool, and being a skilled horseman was valued well beyond the utilitarian value of such skills. Many Tibetan festivals, for instance, featured horse racing, with racers often required to snatch white scarves off the ground while riding at a full gallop (figure 6.1).[34] Races like

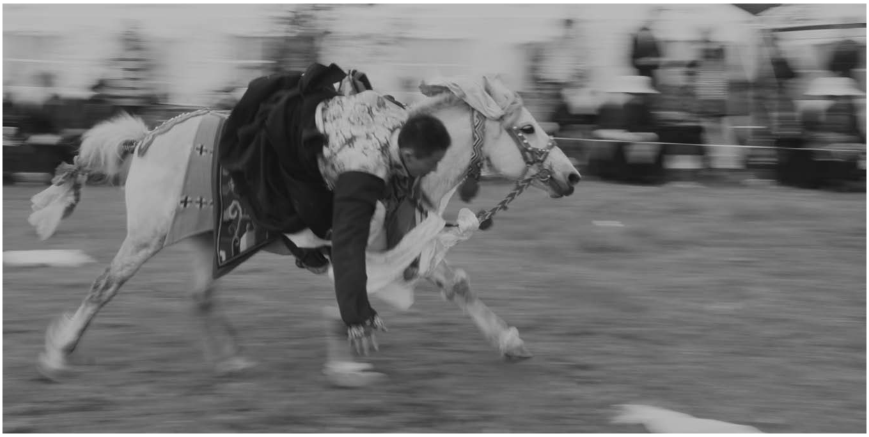


FIGURE 6.1 Horse racing in contemporary Kham. Photo by the author.

these are a regular part of contemporary festivals, and also feature in some pre-communist texts (such as the Gesar legends discussed below). They are also obviously dangerous, and prize bravery—even recklessness—just as much as skill.

Alongside this emphasis on horsemanship, many Tibetans prided themselves on their skill with weapons. The types of weapons available in pre-communist Tibet varied widely by time and place, but frequently included swords, spears, bows, and, more recently, matchlock rifles (figure 6.2).

Like horses, these weapons had practical uses, ranging from defending the family home to hunting wild game. As the twentieth-century warrior Aten notes, "In a land as lawless and uncertain as ours, a rifle was an essential part of a man's life."[35] Also like horses, however, a Tibetan man's weapons carried significant symbolic weight. In his *History of Modern Tibet, Volume 3*, Melvyn Goldstein has noted the pervasive importance of guns in the culture of the eastern region of Kham during the early twentieth century. In his analysis, this preoccupation with firearms had its roots in the practical need to defend oneself (and to attack others) but also went well beyond such

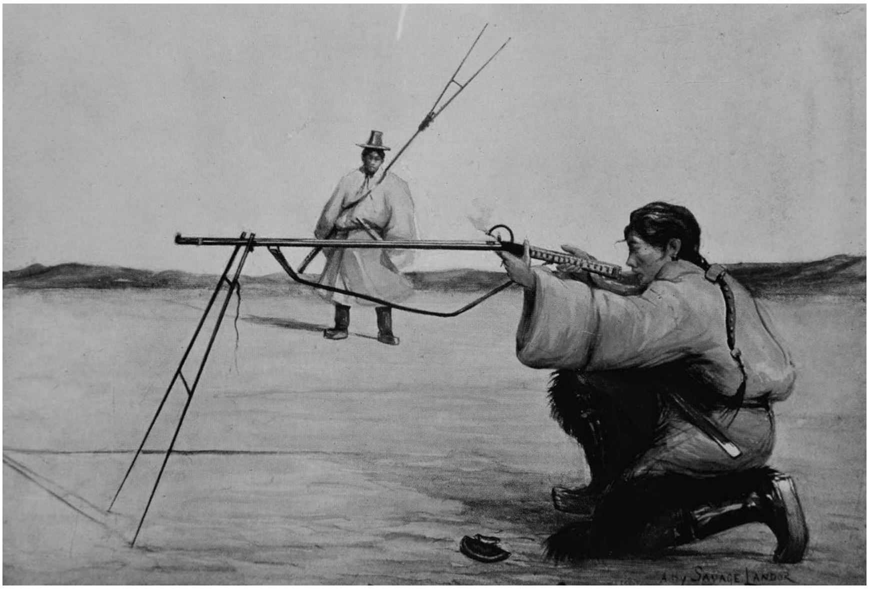


FIGURE 6.2 Firing a matchlock rifle. 1905 painting by Henry Savage Landor. Henry Savage Landor, *Tibet & Nepal* (London: A. & C. Black, 1905). Collection of the author.

practical necessity. Guns, he argues, were "fundamental to their [Khampa] ethnic identity," and the Chinese military's attempt to confiscate them was a major cause of the uprising that began in Kham 1956.[36] In supporting this point, Goldstein quotes a former Tibetan official named Rinchen, who notes, "The Khambas consider guns almost more important than life [laughs]. . . . They will say, 'Horses and guns are more important than life, so why should we give this up?' "[37]

This emphasis on firearms and other weapons also speaks to a broader valorization of fighting and military skill. Warfare and fighting has a long history in Tibet, with battles frequently appearing in prehistoric rock art.[38] Despite the influence of Buddhism over subsequent centuries, the warrior tradition continues. Across Tibet, different clans and communities feuded with each other over land, livestock, or other grievances.[39] The ongoing presence of such feuds is well attested in Tibetan biographical literature, as Tibetan lamas often claim to have used their religious influence to stop local feuds. Shabkar, to give only one example among many, claims to have "settled eighteen significant feuds in which many had been killed."[40] Shabkar (and the many others with similar stories) may have succeeded in stopping these individual feuds, but the presence of such stories in texts dating to many different centuries demonstrates that Tibetan religious leaders were unable to stamp out the practice of feuding on an ongoing basis. Further, the use of militaristic violence often extended beyond feuding to the practice of banditry. While it is difficult to say with any precision how widespread raiding was as an occupation, it was locally common at some times and places. As Yudru Tsomu notes in her study of the nineteenth-century warlord Gönpo Namgyel, "Banditry as a means of economic betterment was an accepted social practice and was widespread in [the Kham polity of] Nyarong."[41]

Importantly, those individuals who fought (successfully) in armed feuds or raids often prided themselves on their skill and bravery. Drawing on fieldwork conducted by the anthropologist Ren Naiqing in the 1920s, Yudru Tsomu argues that "people in Kham took pride in their bravery and thought highly of the strong and valiant. . . . in order to be admired by others and have high social standing in the group, a young man had to prove himself by fighting bravely in wars or raids."[42] Melvyn Goldstein makes a similar observation, citing a Khampa man's description of his hometown just prior to the Chinese invasion: " 'Since the old days, Litang's specialty was fighting and robbing. Everybody was show-offish; what should I say, it was their tradition.' "[43]

Despite Buddhism's clear rejection of violence and the ongoing efforts of many lamas to rein in feuding and banditry, armed violence remained a point of pride for many. For them, war and feuding were not evils to be to be avoided, but rather a field on which to test and display their prowess.

This warrior ideal is given shape in the myths and stories surrounding Gesar of Ling (figure 6.3). Gesar is a legendary king who may (or may not) have lived in the kingdom of Ling in Kham during the eleventh century. Whatever the historical reality of his life, his story has been told and retold across Tibet for centuries. In these stories, which were often sung by professional

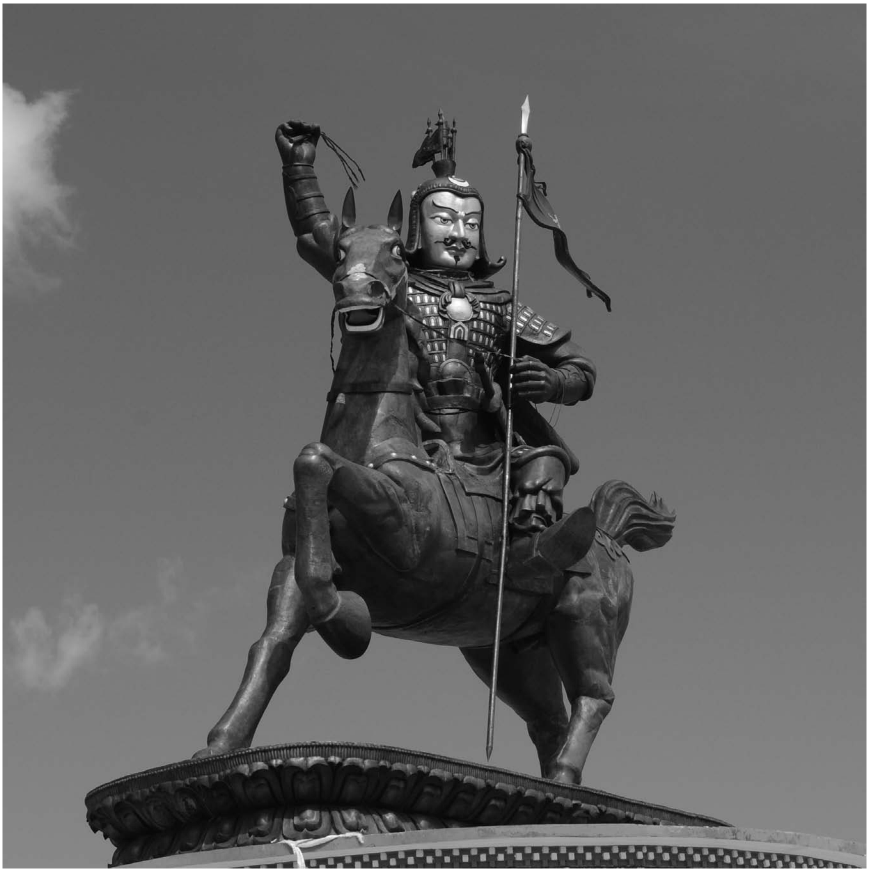


FIGURE 6.3 Recent statue of Gesar, mounted and brandishing a spear. Machen, Amdo. Image © Katia Buffetrille. Used with permission.

bards, Gesar is presented as a semidivine warrior king who embodies many of the ideals discussed here. He is a skilled horseman who wins his throne in a race and is often visually depicted astride a magical horse.

Moreover, he routinely uses violence and warfare in righteous campaigns to subdue neighboring kingdoms. His story is often given a Buddhist veneer, usually through depicting his enemies as evil non-Buddhists, but at its heart the Gesar legends are a celebration of the heroic warrior ideal. As Geoffrey Samuel puts it, "the epic is felt to express the martial and heroic spirit of the [Khampa] people."[44]

The ideal I have outlined here seems to be almost entirely the prerogative of men. Some female buddhas, such as Palden Lhamo, brandish weapons, and one of Gesar's companions is a female warrior named A-tag Lhamo.[45] Aside from these, however, I have found few other references to women participating in this idealization of strength and violence. On the contrary, women were frequently barred from engaging in such activities, even symbolically. Rinzin Thargyal reports that in early twentieth-century Kham, women were not allowed to touch a family's weapons out of fear that this would cause swords to dull and rifles to stop firing.[46] Toni Huber reports that similar taboos were in effect among twentieth-century hunting communities on the Changtang Plateau, far west of Kham.[47] These restrictions were not part of a general ban on women performing physical labor: women across the plateau regularly engaged in a large share of the physical labor required by both herding and farming lifestyles. Instead, the pervasiveness of these prohibitions point toward a culture where the use of weapons is part of an ideal associated specifically with masculinity, not simply the practical needs of herding life. Charlene Makley makes a similar point in *The Violence of Liberation*, observing that in early twenty-first-century Amdo those qualities associated with the figure of the hero, including physical and mental strength and the ability to conquer one's enemies, are believed to inhere in the male body, but are absent from the female body.[48] In short, the glorification of strength, bravery, weapons, and violence that I have discussed here represents an ideal that is specifically gendered male.

It is also worth noting that these masculine ideals are essentially performative. Scholars of gender have noted that individuals construct their gender identity through their conduct, consciously and unconsciously associating themselves with gender ideals by performing actions recognized by their culture as either masculine or feminine.[49] When a Tibetan man climbs on a horse and participates in a race or wears a jeweled sword in his belt, he is making a social statement, claiming the mantle of masculinity associated with these practices. By choosing to reject such behaviors, on the other hand, a man could distance himself from such an identity, perhaps associating himself with an alternate vision of masculinity in the process. In either case, the individual performs actions that both draw on and reinforce gender norms to create a public persona that is read and interpreted by those around him. In many ways this is similar to Dodrubchen's advice on silk robes discussed previously: save your good clothes for public occasions when they will be seen by others so that you can project an image of wealth and success. Both the heroic masculine and economic perspectives, then, should be seen as inherently performative, deeply engaged with the pursuit of social standing and respect.

As an alert reader may have noticed, most of the sources I have drawn on in this discussion are associated with the eastern region of Kham. This is not simply a fluke, but represents a widespread stereotype common among many contemporary and pre-communist Tibetans, in which Tibetans from this region are seen as particularly violent and warlike. In a striking example of this assumption, the Austrian mountaineer Heinrich Harrer reports that in central Tibet during the 1940s, the word "Khampa," which nominally referred to any resident of Kham, was also the most common term used to refer to armed bandits.[50] It is not my goal here to attempt to assess the accuracy of such stereotypes, and it may very well be the case that the violent aspects of the heroic masculine ideal were more prevalent in Kham than in other regions. This association with Kham, however, should not obscure the fact that traces of this ideal are found in records from numerous times and locales across the Tibetan plateau. While Gesar is particularly popular in Kham, for instance, his story was sung, printed, and commented on in Central Tibet as well.[51] Similarly, Robert Ekvall notes that the use of weapons was widespread in early twentieth-century Amdo, to the extent that even the poorest family owns at least one rifle.[52] The heroic masculine ideal may or may not have been as powerful in other regions as it was in Kham, but, as will be seen in the discussion of hunting and masculinity that follows, it certainly existed and influenced individuals in other regions as well.

Exercising Dominance Over Animals

Meat eating, and animals more broadly, were viewed very differently according to the heroic masculine ideal than in either the Buddhistic or economic perspectives. The male hero emphasized strength, bravery, and martial ability, and animals often found themselves a convenient way to display these skills. Violence against and domination over animals was one way for an individual to prove his masculine bona fides. This can be seen in a number of areas of Tibetan culture, but hunting provides a good place to begin.

Hunting has a long history in Tibet, with rock art and other archeological evidence demonstrating that hunting was an important practice long before the historical period (figure 6.4).[53]

Such hunts presumably provided a needed source of food, but they also provided an opportunity for participants to display their bravery and skill at arms. In his analysis of some of the earliest written records of hunting practices, Brandon Dotson has argued that during the Tibetan Imperial Period, emperors engaged in large-scale royal hunts as a calculated way to demonstrate their power and authority.[54] As an example, Dotson points to

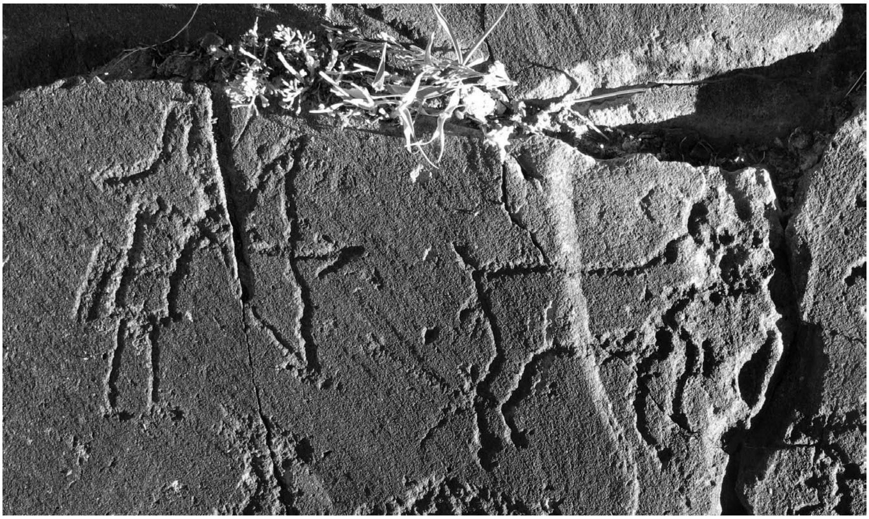


FIGURE 6.4 Neolithic rock art depicting an archer (*left*) aiming at a four-legged animal, probably a deer (*right*). Image © John Vincent Bellezza. Used with permission.

the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*'s eulogy to the seventh-century Emperor Tri Düsong: "From the time when Emperor [Tri Düsong] was small, although he was young, he slaughtered wild boar, fettered wild yaks, seized tigers by the tail, and so forth."[55] Tri Düsong's conquests over dangerous animals proved his strength and manhood. By extension, such exploits also established both his right and ability to rule.

Dotson focuses his analysis on the Imperial Period, but hunting has remained an important part of Tibetan culture down to the present day. Numerous anthropological accounts mention the importance of hunting to many communities. Rinzin Thargyal, for instance, notes that in Kham during the 1940s, hunting provided both meat for personal consumption and valuable animal products (such as horn and musk) that could be sold.[56] On the contemporary Changtang Plateau, John Bellezza notes that nomads continue to maintain hunting traditions, including a specific pantheon of zoomorphic deities that assist in the hunt.[57] Further, biographies of religious leaders frequently attest to their efforts to end hunting in their regions. Jigmé Lingpa's *Autobiography,* to give one example among many, records no less that three separate occasions when Jigmé Lingpa purchased an entire mountain for the sole purpose of ending hunting by "sealing" the site.[58] The frequency with which various lamas attempted to end hunting points to the fact that hunting, despite the lamas' entreaties, remained widespread.

Given the many lamas who have critiqued hunting over the years, we might expect its practitioners to engage in it reluctantly, perhaps viewing it as a necessary evil, just as many Tibetans viewed meat eating. The available sources, however, suggest that far from being embarrassed by or regretting their actions, many hunters actually took pride in their skills. This is certainly the case in contemporary Tibet, where young men routinely brag about their ability to kill difficult game. In their discussion of nomadic life in mid-1980s western Tibet, Goldstein and Beall quote a young man who recalls being proud of his ability as a hunter, only coming to regret his actions after a series of misfortunes he blamed on the negative karma he had accrued through hunting.[59] While this man ultimately adopts a Buddhistic attitude toward hunting, his earlier actions are far more reminiscent of the heroic ideal.

A similar pattern can be seen in pre-communist textual material as well. It is a fairly common trope in Buddhist texts for a lama to encounter a hunter in the mountains, point out the immorality of hunting and, ultimately, convert the hunter to Buddhistic morality. Perhaps the most famous of these comes from a fifteenth-century account of the famed twelfth-century hermit Milarepa, who encounters an angry hunter only to subdue and tame him by singing religious songs.[60] A more telling version of this type of encounter, however, can be found in Jigmé Lingpa's *Song of the Hunted Deer*, a text already encountered in chapter 2. In this text, a man hunting deer deep in the mountains comes across a hermit meditating in a cave. The hermit rebukes the hunter for his immoral conduct, but the hunter pushes back, accusing the hermit of hypocrisy, pointing out that if people like the hermit didn't buy meat, people like the hunter wouldn't hunt. In the end, the hermit wins the argument and the hunter repents. Prior to this point, however, he expresses significant pride in his skills and abilities as a hunter.[61] Jigmé Lingpa's *Autobiography* recalls that he wrote this story immediately after a frustrating encounter with a group of hunters, so it seems likely that his depiction of the hunter is based on his experiences with real people who took pride in their skills as huntsmen.[62] For these people, hunting skill was a point of pride, not something to be ashamed of.

As with the earlier discussion of horsemanship and weaponry, hunting is almost exclusively a male occupation. As noted previously, women were frequently not even allowed to touch a family's weapons, effectively barring them from pursuing any form of hunting. Further, Toni Huber has argued that hunting is closely aligned with warfare and the defeating of human enemies. He notes that in his field site on western Tibet's Changtang Plateau, the same deities are worshipped prior to a hunt or a war. Similarly, the divination techniques employed to determine the success of a hunt or a war are identical, suggesting that, for these Tibetans, hunted animals were understood to be analogous to enemies pursued in war.[63] Hunting, in this analysis, is structurally aligned with the performance of warfare, an overwhelmingly masculine activity in Tibetan society.

The association between hunting and strength, bravery, and skill at arms is particularly apparent when the game being sought was large, dangerous, or both. The wild yak bull, in particular, is known for its strength, violence, and unpredictable nature.[64] These animals can weigh as much as one thousand kilograms, and routinely charged their pursuers. Hunting these animals was genuinely dangerous, particularly before the introduction of modern firearms. Because of this danger, those who successfully killed a wild yak bull achieved popular respect and acclaim. As Toni Huber puts it, "The massive wild yak bull is legendary for its immense power, and the human ability to capture or kill one has always been the measure of a hero."[65]

This connection between killing dangerous animals and masculine ideals is perfectly captured in a story from the *Autobiography* of Do Khyentsé. Do Khyentsé was a nineteenth-century incarnation of Jigmé Lingpa, but also had a reputation as something of a wild figure, and many stories are told about his bizarre and sometimes violent conduct.[66] Before discussing his own life, his *Autobiography* presents the mythological origins of his clan, which hailed from the Golok region of eastern Tibet, located between Kham and Amdo. In this account, the tribe's progenitor, Longchen Tar, is approached by a local god for help. The god, in the form of a yak bull, fights daily with a demon, also in the form of a great yak bull. Longchen Tar is a noted archer, and at the god's behest he kills the demonic yak, ending the struggle. The god is pleased, and promises to fulfill Longchen Tar's every wish. The next day, he is told, a frightening animal will come to him: all he has to do is stand his ground and touch it. When a divine white yak bull appears, however, he is so terrified that he does not dare approach. The next day, the god rebukes him, saying, "You didn't act like a man!"[67] A similar pattern repeats the next day. When a terrible tigress appears, Longchen Tar does nothing and the god chides him for his fear: "If tomorrow you cannot bring up your courage, there is nothing I can do for you."[68] On the third day, a crocodile appears, but this time the man is able to throw a handful of sand at it. The animals are the god's divine daughters. If Longchen Tar had been able to touch them, he and his descendants would have been rich and powerful, ruling over India and Tibet. As it is, by throwing sand at the third daughter, he is able to acquire only cattle, a tent, and land.[69]

This is not a story about hunting, per se, nor about meat eating. What it does demonstrate quite well, however, is the relationship between dominating animals—particularly dangerous animals—and ideals of masculinity. Longchen Tar's initial ascent to fame is through his skill at arms and his ability to kill a yak bull, an act that brings great reward. His strength, skill, and bravery in this instance demonstrate his right to wealth and political power. His subsequent cowardice in the face of the fearful creatures that follow, however, results in an explicit questioning of his masculinity and calls his right to any reward at all into question. Dominance over animals is a proof of strength explicitly linked to Longchen Tar's masculinity—or lack thereof—and aligned with the right to wealth, beautiful women, and political power.

Both Do Khyentsé and his clan progenitor Longchen Tar came from Golok, a region close to Kham that is also stereotypically associated with masculine ideals such as strength and violence. Similar themes, however, can also be found in Tashi Khedrup's autobiography, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*. Tashi Khedrup was a monk at Sera Monastery during the 1940s and 1950s, and tells the story of a man named Dorjé who lived in his natal village near Lhasa in Central Tibet. While out herding one day, Dorjé came across a leopard that had killed one of his sheep. Unarmed, Dorjé jumped on the powerful cat and, unable to kill it bare-handed, carried the live animal back to his village, where it was killed by another man. Dorjé was grievously wounded in the encounter, but somehow survived. Tashi Khedrup recalls that "everyone was astonished and terrified. . . . He got a lot of praise from everyone and the steward of the monastery gave him a big reward."[70] Tashi Khedrup does not explicitly link Dorjé's strength with his masculinity, as Do Khyentsé does with Longchen Tar. This story does demonstrate quite clearly, however, that the masculine virtues of strength and bravery—as demonstrated by dominating dangerous animals—were a source of social praise in regions far removed from Kham and Golok.

In "The Changing Role of Hunting and Wildlife in Pastoral Communities of Northern Tibet," Toni Huber presents a list of four "principal goals" that motivate hunters: supplementing a family's food supply, seeking skins and other raw materials to work into goods that can be sold, seeking animal products such as musk that can be sold for a profit, and controlling the number of predatory animals that can deplete herds.[71] Notably, all these reasons are economic in nature. While Tibetan hunters were certainly motivated by economic strategies like these, the connection between hunting and masculinity suggests that this list is incomplete, and that noneconomic factors also need to be considered. As Dotson demonstrates, hunting was explicitly held up as proof of an individual's masculinity during the Imperial Period. And traces of this old attitude have persisted across the plateau. Hunters took pride in their skills, associated hunting with warfare, and continued to hold up the subduing of dangerous animals as proof of an individual's strength and virility. In addition to its economic role, hunting or dominating animals offered men an opportunity to publicly perform their masculine identity.

This aspect of hunting is particularly expressed through the admittedly rare practice of sport hunting. While most Tibetans hunted with some economic motivation, Rinzin Thargyal notes that in 1940s Kham, some relatively wealthy individuals hunted purely for the pleasure of the hunt itself.[72] Rinzin Thargyal does not elaborate on these hunters' motivations, but they are clearly not doing it with a sense of sadness or regret, and we can assume that they derived a sense of satisfaction and pride from their skill. Despite centuries of condemnation by Buddhist religious leaders, hunting still carried some of the connotations of bravery and masculinity that it had during the Imperial Period. Subduing and killing a wild animal, particularly a dangerous wild animal, was still a source of masculine pride.

Meat and Masculinity

Hunting and otherwise dominating animals is, of course, distinct from the everyday consumption of meat that is the focus of this book. While eating meat when it was available was the norm in Tibet, however, it still carried with it many of the masculine connotations associated with dominating animals. These connotations are clear when the meat in question came from an animal that the individual had personally hunted. Hunting required strength, skill, and courage, particularly if the animal hunted was dangerous. In such situations, meat on the table was manifest proof of the person's ability to dominate, to the fullest degree possible, the animal in question.

The connections between meat and dominating animals become less pronounced, however, when the meat in question is from the routine slaughter of animals from one's own herd or was simply purchased in a market. Slaughtering from one's own herd, after all, requires significantly less bravery and skill than hunting a wild animal, and purchasing meat requires even less than that. And yet, any meat is ultimately derived from the death of an animal. Professional herders exercise control over the lives of their animals, choosing when and where they graze, when they breed, and, ultimately, when they die. Consuming meat derived from domesticated animals, therefore, retains symbolic overtones of humanity's ability to dominate and control. These overtones of dominance may lessen as the consumer becomes increasingly removed from the actual act of killing, but they remain intact.

Similar connections between meat eating and asserting dominance over animals have been noted in other cultural contexts as well. Writing primarily about the contemporary United Kingdom, for instance, Nick Fiddes argues that meat is a key symbol of humanity's exalted station:

> Belief in human dominion does not merely legitimate meat eating—the reverse is also true: meat reinforces that presumption. Killing, cooking, and eating other animals' flesh provides perhaps the ultimate authentication of human superiority over the rest of nature, with the spilling of their blood a vibrant motif. Thus, for individuals and societies to whom environmental control is an important value meat consumption is typically a key symbol. Meat has long stood for Man's proverbial "muscle" over the natural world.[73]

Fiddes writes about a context far removed from the Tibetan steppe, and yet his core observation, that consuming meat is a symbolic expression of dominance, holds true there as well. Eating meat may have been a normal part of life for many Tibetans, but it also retained its association with the assertion of control and domination over animals that we have seen associated with the heroic masculine ideal.

Beyond meat's status as a symbol of one's ability to dominate animals, it was also intimately related to the cultivation of physical strength, one of the most important aspects of the heroic masculine ideal. As discussed in chapter 5, Tibetan medicine is based on maintaining and, if necessary, restoring the balance among the wind, bile, and phlegm humors. According to the *Four Tantras*, eating meat serves to help maintain this balance, particularly as a support for the wind humor. If the wind humor becomes excessively powerful, the body will sicken and become physically weaker. Meat serves to counteract this weakness, and is often prescribed to keep up an individual's strength. Beyond the formal medical tradition itself, meat was popularly regarded as necessary for physical strength. This is shown in the many instances where lamas who otherwise advocate vegetarianism allow those who are physically weak to eat meat in order to regain their strength. Shabkar, for instance, explicitly allows meat for those who are, "ill, physically exhausted and close to death."[74] Even more explicitly, Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen writes that "if you do not eat [meat], your bodily strength will be feeble."[75] For all of these figures, eating meat was an important way to build and maintain bodily strength.

It is not surprising, therefore, that individuals renowned for their strength are often portrayed as voracious consumers of meat. In a collection of folk songs published in 2012, Dawa Drolma retells a story that features Gerab Shepochen, a heroic strongman from the Degé region of Kham. Gerab Shepochen was a simple herder who rose to prominence not through mental acumen, but through his extraordinary strength. As proof of this heroic ability, the text repeatedly describes him as able to eat a leg of yak and two measures of tsampa at every meal.[76] For those who listened to this story, Gerab Shepochen's ability to eat immense quantities of meat was visible proof of his superhuman strength. Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk tells a similar story about Tashi Sengé, a famous strongman who becomes a disciple of the eleventh-century master Drokmi Lotsawa. Like Gerab Shepochen, Tashi Sengé is renowned for his strength, a fact that is demonstrated through his ability to eat as much as half a yak in a single sitting.[77] The prominence given to meat in both stories aligns with the relationship between meat and strength seen elsewhere. It would be quite surprising to hear that such a heroic strongman was a vegetarian.

Physical strength is one of the key elements in the ideal of the masculine hero. Many aspects of this ideal, in fact, including horsemanship, military skill, and the ability to dominate dangerous animals, would be impossible without a large measure of physical strength. Meat, therefore, with all of its associations with physical strength, fits neatly into this idealized vision. It is, in and of itself, the result of having dominated and controlled an animal's life and also serves as a support for the physical strength that lies at the core of this vision. Meat, in other words, is the food of a male hero.

This perspective is nicely encapsulated in a brief passage from an early twentieth-century version of the Gesar epic edited and compiled by Jamgön Mipham and Gyurmé Tübten Jamyang Drakpa. In this story, a female serpent spirit is betrothed to a human man. This female spirit, however, is none too pleased with her match, complaining about being sent to live in the land of the "idiot race of red-faced meat-eating Tibetans."[78] Speaking in the voice of this serpent spirit, the anonymous author of this version of the legend acknowledges that the world of Gesar, with its emphasis on warfare and other aspects of heroic masculinity, is not appealing to an individual raised in the relatively peaceful setting of the serpent spirit world. Importantly for this study, eating meat is explicitly held up as a marker of that type of violent, masculine lifestyle. Once again, meat is the characteristic food of the heroic masculine warrior.

Interviews with contemporary Tibetans in Kham suggest that this association between meat and masculinity can be so strong that some find vegetarianism emasculating. More than once, young men told me that without meat they couldn't fulfill their duties as men. One teenager, for instance, claimed that without meat his strength would dissipate, and he wouldn't be able to hold his own in a fight anymore. He laughed as he said this, suggesting the contempt with which he viewed such weaklings. Another young man, dressed in Western-style clothing but with a Tibetan sword tucked discreetly inside his trousers, acknowledged that Buddhism opposes meat eating, but then dismissed these concerns, stating simply, "Without meat, you can't be a real man." These interviews represent contemporary opinion, and are discussed in more detail in this book's epilogue. They also align, however, with the general patterns found in pre-communist literary sources, suggesting that, even then, publicly adopting a vegetarian lifestyle may have been seen as emasculating, negatively affecting the strength that heroic masculinity required and removing a key element in the social performance of masculine identity.

Alternative Masculinities

This association of meat with strength and masculinity is hardly limited to the Tibetan world. Sociologists in the contemporary United States, for instance, have regularly noted that men who eat meat are regarded as more masculine than male vegetarians.[79] Looking at the different eating habits of married couples, for instance, Jeffery Sobol declares, "Meat, especially red meat, is an archetypical masculine food."[80] Similarly, in her analysis of Gandhi's vegetarianism, Parama Roy notes that in both London and India at the turn of the twentieth century, there was a strong association between meat eating and physical strength. As an example of this, Roy points towards a doggerel that Gandhi repeats in his *Autobiography*, "Behold the mighty Englishman / He rules the Indian small / Because being a meat-eater / He is five cubits tall."[81]

More resonant with the themes of this book, although vegetarianism has been normative among Chinese Buddhist monastics for centuries, some monks whose practice focused on the martial arts ate meat to support their strength. In his study of the "martial" monks of the famed Shaolin Monastery, Meir Shahar notes that although a certain group of core monks have long maintained a vegetarian diet, by the seventeenth century many others ate meat regularly.[82] Moreover, these monks justified their deviant diets with the idea that meat was necessary to develop the physical strength required by their practice of martial arts.[83] To illustrate this point, Shahar points to Lu Zhishen,[84] a central character in *The Water Margin*,[85] one of China's greatest literary works. Lu Zhishen is a soldier of superhuman strength who becomes a monk in order to escape capital punishment.[86] While he has officially become a monk, however, Lu Zhishen's conduct does not conform to monastic norms, and he repeatedly engages in combat, as well as epic bouts of drinking and meat eating.[87] As with the monks of Shaolin, Lu Zhishen's meat eating is intimately connected with his physical prowess, held up as both proof and explanation of his extraordinary strength. The situation in Tibet, clearly, is just one instance among many where eating meat is associated with masculinity, particularly such virtues as physical strength, martial skill, and the ability to dominate others.

Alongside this connection between meat and masculinity, however, scholars have also noted the presence of alternate masculine ideals that seek to subvert the importance of meat. Parama Roy, for instance, has argued that Gandhi defines his own masculinity, in part, through the rejection of meat and other aspects of hegemonic masculinity. By refusing to eat meat, Gandhi asserts his ability to control and regulate his own physical desires, a control that is, in and of itself, a masculine virtue.[88] While Gandhi frequently associated vegetarianism with femininity, in his own instance he fashions it into an alternative form of masculinity based on control and self-discipline. For Gandhi, this alternative masculine ideal is possible precisely because it is juxtaposed with hegemonic masculine ideals that promote meat. Opposing this norm, at least when presented as a conscious exercise of discipline, enables Gandhi to reject meat without sacrificing his public, masculine identity.

Andrea Petitt has noted another example of alternative masculinities in her study of cowboys in western Canada. These cowboys live a lifestyle that resonates in many ways with that of Tibetan herders, building their careers around the needs of their herds. Also like Tibetan herders, these cowboys are deeply engaged with the type of "macho" masculinity that prizes domination over animals. In addition to participating in this vision of masculinity, however, Petitt also notes that these cowboys prized the ability to control animals "with a light hand" and sometimes created warm personal bonds with the animals under their control.[89] Petitt calls, therefore, for a new, more complex understanding of cowboy masculinity, one that recognizes "traditional, macho cowboy masculinity," but that also acknowledges other, alternate forms of masculinity in these men's relationship with their animals.[90]

Like Petitt's Canadian cowboys, my own experience with herding communities in contemporary Tibet suggests that they often develop warm bonds with their animals. I have frequently heard herders speak of their animals with genuine affection and kindness. In other instances, I have heard a horseman praised for his ability to win races with minimal use of the whip. Yes, their profession requires that herders attempt to maximize the economic value of their animals, but many try to do so with what Petitt refers to as a "light hand." This, at least, has been my experience with contemporary herders, and I have no reason to believe the situation was different in precommunist times.

In some contexts, Tibetan religious leaders also invert the normal association between meat and masculinity in ways reminiscent of Gandhi's approach to vegetarianism. In her study of gender roles in contemporary Amdo, Charlene Makley has highlighted the fact that while masculine ideals include physical strength, they also include mental attributes such as intelligence and discipline.[91] While meat is central to such ideals as strength and power, avoiding it can display some of these other, alternate masculine ideals. Meat, after all, was considered both tasty and healthy, and giving it up required a reasonable degree of self-discipline. In previous chapters, I have discussed how vegetarianism could have a legitimating effect for religious leaders. It was proof that they placed their vocation above personal desires. When adopted by religious leaders, therefore, vegetarianism could lose some of its normal associations. Rather than being emasculating, it could be a demonstration of another, alternate masculine ideal.

All these alternate masculinities, however, remain alternative, and meat retains its important role in the dominant, hegemonic masculinity embodied by the male hero. Using a light hand to control animals may be admired, but only when control is retained. If a gentle approach results in loss of control over livestock, it becomes laughable, proof that the individual in questions lacks the ability to dominate and control his herds. Likewise, vegetarianism's ability to highlight such masculine attributes as mental fortitude depends on meat's status as a masculine norm. If meat was not associated with dominant ideals about masculinity, giving it up would lose its cultural force and could no longer function to legitimate a person's commitment to religion.

While acknowledging the importance of these alternate forms of masculinity in Tibet and the place of meat in them, it is also important to remember that the ideal of the male hero, strong, skilled, and a consumer of meat, remains the baseline against which other masculine ideals are defined.

Masculinity and Buddhistic Morality

On a basic level, this celebration of strength, bravery, and violence is in tension with Buddhistic ideals that prize patience, compassion, and religious attainment. Tibetans themselves acknowledge this tension, a point demonstrated clearly in a popular myth describing the origins of the Tibetan people themselves. In this story, a demonic rock ogress falls in love with a bodhisattva monkey. The monkey agrees to marry the ogress, not out of his own desire but out of a compassionate response to her longing. In the end, the children the monkey and ogress produce become the first members of the Tibetan race. As Martin Mills has noted, this story points towards a "powerful cultural understanding of Tibetan personhood as dual and ambiguous—the pious monkey ancestor and his demonic consort locked in endless struggle and embrace."[92] For many Tibetans, a tendency toward violence was understood to be an integral part of Tibetan identity, an aspect continually in tension with those aspects of Tibetan culture that idealized Buddhistic morality.

More practically, the fact that Tibetans acknowledged a discrepancy between Buddhism and idealized masculinity can be seen in many lamas' repeated attempts to end feuding and other forms of intercommunity violence. Accounts of such interventions are a common feature of many lamas' biographies and autobiographies. Shabkar, to give only one example, recalls hearing about feuding in a nearby region. In response, he travelled to the area and "spoke on both religious and worldly topics, settling them down."[93] Shabkar claims his intervention was successful in this instance, but it was hardly the end of feuding in Tibet.[94] Through their repeated intervention, lamas such as Shabkar make clear that, in their understanding, Buddhism was opposed to such violence.

While many Tibetans acknowledged the tension between the religious and heroic spheres, this does not mean that the two remained fully separate. Individuals could, and usually did, draw on both of these ideals as they decided how to live their lives. The integrated nature of these ideals can be seen throughout Tibetan literature, though the Gesar cycle provides a particularly good example. As we have already seen, Gesar is a warrior figure who embodies many aspects of the male hero. At the same time, however, Gesar stories are usually told within a Buddhist framework. Gesar's military conquests, in most tellings, are not motivated by greed but by a righteous desire to convert neighboring kingdoms to Buddhism. Often, Gesar is presented as a representative or messenger of Padmasambhava, the Indian Buddhist master who helped spread Buddhism in Tibet.[95] Gesar's Buddhist affiliation does not prevent him from waging war, but by placing his heroic qualities within a Buddhist frame, the Gesar storytellers blend both religious and masculine ideals.

This attempt to integrate both heroic and Buddhist spheres also manifests in herders' treatment of their animals. Goldstein and Beall report, for example, that prior to killing their animals, herders often say a short Buddhist prayer for the animal, enabling it to attain a better life in the future.[96] Hunters, too, sometimes chanted mantras in order to ameliorate their sins. In *My Tibetan Childhood*, Naktsang Nulo recalls his father killing an antelope while the family was on pilgrimage from Amdo to Lhasa: "'I won't kill any more. This one's enough,' Father told us. 'You boys must chant *maṇis*,[97] all right?' But after that Father killed antelopes or gazelles whenever we were hungry—we filled the saddlebags with meat many more times. We ate well on our journey and chanted a lot of *maṇis*."[98] Like Gesar, this veneer of Buddhistic morality does not prevent hunters or herders from killing the animal in question, and several lamas have questioned both the sincerity and effectiveness of such prayers.[99] What these prayers do demonstrate quite well, however, is the degree to which Buddhist morality is recognized and acknowledged by these men, despite the fact that this recognition is unable to overcome their allegiance to the heroic masculine ideal.

The mingling of heroic and religious perspectives worked the other way as well: Buddhist religious leaders routinely acted in ways that appear to prioritize the masculine ideal. In his *Autobiography*, the nineteenth-century master Düdjom Lingpa recalls using his skill with wrathful mantras to attack his opponents on several occasions. In one such instance Düdjom Lingpa uses sorcery to attack a political figure that had opposed him, causing her to "go blind, lose her authority, and then die."[100] Düdjom is proud of his skillful use of ritual in this and other cases, concluding that his wrathful deities were "without rival."[101] Like Gesar, Düdjom frames his conduct as a necessary means of defending and propagating Buddhism, but his actions themselves, and the pride he takes in them, draw far more on the heroic masculine ideal than any religious norms.

The integration of masculine ideals within a religious context can also be seen in the famed *dobdob* monks, found in many of Tibet's large monasteries. These monks, sometimes called punk monks, or fighting monks, were characterized by their strength, courage, and willingness to fight. In his *Autobiography*, Tashi Khedrup, a former dobdob from Sera Monastery in central Tibet, recalls performing strength training (particularly long-jumping) with his dobdob brethren. He also notes that dobdob routinely carried large keys that served primarily as weapons, and that fights were normal (Tashi Khedrup himself once split open a rival's head with his key). For many dobdob, Tashi Khedrup recalls, fighting was normal, to the extent that "some of them felt that they had to have a fight now and then to prove they were strong and afraid of nothing."[102] As with laymen racing horses, these fights were performative, allowing a dobdob to prove his masculine bona fides in front of peers. Despite such conduct, however, dobdob were an accepted part of the monastic community, serving as bodyguards, policemen, and as soldiers during feuds with rival monasteries. For these monks, many of whom expressed little interest in such monastic activities as study or meditation, life as a dobdob allowed them to maintain their identity as a monk while also claiming the mantle of a male hero.

Entire monasteries could also be directly involved in the type of violent feuding that characterizes the masculine ideal. In his detailed history of Amdo's Labrang Monastery, Paul Nietupski notes that regions under the monastery's jurisdiction sometimes feuded with neighboring communities. In these instances, the monastery's representatives often served as militia commanders. This even extended to Labrang's senior-most incarnation lineage, the Jamyang Shepas, who "played the role of commander-in-chief of the militia, giving sanction to militia operations."[103] Being a monk, even a revered incarnation, did not fully vitiate the call to engage in masculine violence.

A final, colorful example of the way masculine ideals could permeate religious life comes from *Land of the Lamas*, a travelogue by the American diplomat and explorer William Rockhill. Writing about a journey through Kham in 1889, Rockhill writes that violence was frequent between monasteries in the Degé region. Noting that monastic robes are ill-suited to riding horses in war, Rockhill claims that a necessary precondition for warfare was for the monks to have their skirt-like lower robes converted to trousers. He asserts that simply hearing that their opponents had taken this step, thereby announcing their intention to fight, was often enough to induce the weaker party to surrender.[104] Rockhill is the sole source I am aware of that claims a trip to the tailor could be considered a declaration of war, but whether or not this was widespread, it reinforces the point that masculine ideals—including violence and war—were by no means absent from Tibetan religious institutions.

These are somewhat extreme examples, but they point to the fact that many otherwise religious figures maintained some connection to the heroic masculine ideal. For most Tibetans, it was not simply a matter of choosing to adhere either to the masculine or the Buddhist ideal. These positions were in tension with each other, but rather than rejecting one and adopting the other, most Tibetans tried to navigate that tension, incorporating aspects of each orientation into the lived reality of their daily lives. For some Tibetans, the balance swung decidedly toward the religious ideal. For many others, the religious ideal was a minor component of their lives. Toni Huber makes this point clearly in his study of hunting on the Changtang Plateau: "Local expectations of masculine behavior, and engagement in a largely subsistence economy based upon manipulating animals, mean that Buddhist moral concepts are seldom reference points for the daily lives of men, who are highly pragmatic in fulfilling what life demands of them."[105]

In terms of meat eating, this means that for many Tibetan men the religious drive toward compassion conflicted with the heroic masculine ideal, which prized meat for its role in cultivating and displaying physical strength. Even for those monks and devout laypeople who were otherwise committed to a religious lifestyle, this aspect of the masculine ideal proved hard to give up. At this point it is worth recalling Shabkar's concern that some monks were so invested in building their strength that they were willing to eat meat even when they were not ill.[106] Monks like this may well have been devoutly religious, but they were not willing to give up all concern with strength and masculinity. For them, meat was not a negative or even neutral food. Instead, meat was a positive food that conferred strength and power, masculine qualities not entirely eclipsed by Buddhist morality.

Before concluding, I would note that the connections between meat and gender might not be exclusively male-oriented. Contemporary sources, in fact, suggest that meat may also be a factor in notions of idealized femininity. In a revealing essay posted online in June 2013, the blogger Jamyang Kyi expressed anger at those lamas who promote vegetarianism. At the core of her argument is a concern that if women adopt vegetarianism they will not have sufficient strength to bear the pain of childbirth.[107] Similar concerns were expressed by a woman I spoke with in Kham, who told me that she gave up her vegetarian diet when she got pregnant, but would adopt it again after she finished breastfeeding. For these women, meat is again associated with strength, though this time strength is associated with female, rather than male, ideals. These contemporary women thus hold out the possibility that meat can be gendered female as well as male: it is a part of masculine identity when eaten by men, but when consumed by women, it can be coded female.

Unfortunately, I have found no evidence for similar concerns in pre-communist literature, a fact not wholly surprising, given the relative dearth of written material depicting women's lives and concerns.[108] As Sara Jacoby notes, "The lives, experiences, and perspectives of historical Buddhist women who attained religious mastery in India, across the Himalayas, and in Tibet remain by and large elusive."[109] Given this lack of source material, I cannot claim that this association between meat and feminine identity was widespread (or even present) in pre-communist Tibetan culture. Still, the contemporary evidence holds out the possibility that association between meat and femininity is more significant than I have been able to discuss here. I can only hope that further research will be able to shed more light on this aspect of meat eating.

One of the implications of meat's association with both the economic and heroic masculine orientations is that it continues to factor in discussions of legitimacy, only this time demonstrating the legitimacy of secular, rather than religious, identity. In the previous chapter, I argued that abstention from meat could serve to demonstrate the strength of an individual's commitment to religion. Vegetarianism was widely seen as a difficult diet, after all, and was adopted exclusively for religious reasons. Choosing to give up meat, therefore, was a clear, public statement that the individual prioritized religious concerns over other matters, notably health. Others responded with respect, regularly citing vegetarianism as proof of an individual's sanctity and legitimacy as a religious leader.

In this present chapter, eating meat continues to be implicated in questions of legitimacy, except that in this case the context is reversed. While vegetarianism legitimates an individual's religious identity, consuming meat—particularly unusually large quantities of meat—legitimated an individual's position as either wealthy or powerfully masculine. We have already seen examples of this in Patrül's depiction of the bride who looks down her nose at anyone who fails to provide enough meat and in the figure of Gerab Shepochen, the folk hero whose ability to consume an entire leg of yak at one sitting is held up as a marker of his superhuman strength and masculinity.

Whether approached from a religious, economic, or masculine perspective, then, the question of whether or not to eat meat is more than a simple question of individual morality. Instead, eating or not eating meat is a public symbol of where an individual's primary allegiance lies. For those who prioritize religion, vegetarianism demonstrates the strength of their conviction. For those who prioritize either economic orientation or heroic masculinity, eating a lot of meat demonstrates wealth and strength. In all cases, the choice to eat or not eat meat is a public act, part of a broader act of public self-presentation.

Conclusion

Over the course of this book, I have described three distinct perspectives concerning the question of meat eating in pre-communist Tibet. The first of these, discussed in chapters 2 through 4, prioritized Buddhism and was distinctly uncomfortable with meat eating. Eating meat, in this perspective, was responsible for the death of large numbers of animals and was, therefore, the direct cause of significant suffering. This recognition that eating meat entailed animal suffering led many Tibetan lamas to conclude that eating it was opposed to the compassionate ideal that lies at the heart of Tibetan religiosity. There are outliers, of course, and some few lamas did defend meat eating in religious, usually tantric, terms. These remained outliers, however, and most mainstream religious leaders expressed some level of discomfort over meat eating. Meat was at best problematic and at worst completely incompatible with Buddhist life.

The second of these three perspectives on meat eating accepts the validity of the religious arguments against meat, but also views it as a necessary part of the human diet. Discussed in chapter 5, this perspective drew on medical texts and assumptions to argue that without at least some meat, the three humors found in the body would become unbalanced, resulting in general weakness and lack of strength. As discussed at length in chapter 5, this assumption was widespread, to the extent that many vegetarians saw their own diet as unhealthy. For those who adopted this perspective, meat was a necessary evil, morally problematic but nonetheless a necessary part of human life.

Both of these perspectives acknowledge and respect religious attitudes toward meat. However, while Buddhism was certainly a powerful cultural force on the plateau, other orientations did exist. This present chapter has described two such alternate cultural ideals, one that prioritizes economic gain and one that emphasizes heroic masculinity. Those who adhered primarily to the economic perspective saw meat as both a means of building wealth and a public display of that wealth. For those oriented toward the heroic masculine vision, meat was a support for and proof of an individual's masculinity. In both of these perspectives, religious concerns were set aside and meat was viewed in largely positive terms. These economic and heroic masculine orientations were widespread in Tibet and provided a powerful counter narrative to the anti-meat stance adopted by many Tibetan religious leaders.

As should be clear by now, these three perspectives were in tension with each other. One could not, for instance, fully adhere to both the religious and masculine ideals simultaneously. For most Tibetans, however, navigating the tension between these positions was never about fully adhering to one or another perspective. Instead, individuals were forced to navigate between these various cultural demands, adopting a lifestyle that drew from all of them, though to varying degrees. For those who strongly prioritized Buddhism over other concerns, this meant adopting vegetarianism, though sometimes with misgivings about health or other consequences. More commonly, adherence to some combination of the necessary evil and positive good perspectives allowed individuals to continue eating meat. Some, drawing more strongly on the Buddhist perspective than others, ate it with reluctance, approaching it as an unfortunate, but necessary, part of human well-being. Others, viewing meat primarily through the lens of either the economic or masculine ideals, had no such misgivings, and ate meat with relish.

Many Tibetan lamas recognized the tensions that surrounded meat, and advocates of vegetarianism employed a variety of strategies to deal with it.

As a group, these lamas sought to maintain vegetarianism as an ideal, while also allowing some concessions to the practical and cultural realities of the situation in Tibet, which they understood to make actually giving up meat difficult. We have already seen one such strategy, in which a lama who otherwise insists on vegetarianism allows meat to be eaten when medically necessary. Others encouraged their followers to reduce their consumption but did not demand that it be renounced entirely. Still others promoted vegetarianism, but asked that if one did eat meat, the consumer should recite prayers before eating it. In the next chapter, I discuss these and other strategies that Buddhist leaders used to maintain vegetarianism as an ideal, while simultaneously allowing their disciples some flexibility in the actual implementation of that ideal.

SEVEN

Seeking a Middle Way

THE CENTRAL ARGUMENT of this book is that questions over vegetarianism in pre-communist Tibet were located at the center of a complex tension in which Buddhist ethical arguments competed against perceived medical need and alternative cultural schemas that presented eating meat in largely positive terms. Those lamas and other religious leaders who advocated vegetarianism were well aware of this tension. They may not have articulated it as I have done, but they understood themselves to be in opposition to powerful aspects of their own culture that opposed vegetarianism. In this chapter, I look at the various rhetorical and practical strategies these figures used to modify their pro-vegetarian message in ways that responded to, and often tried to accommodate, alternative perspectives on meat.

For some lamas, especially the most committed vegetarians, responding to pro-meat perspectives was simply a matter of ratcheting up their rhetoric, arguing ever more stridently that strict vegetarianism was a necessary part of Buddhist practice. Most, however, devised strategies that could be somewhat flexible. Some tried to minimize—but not necessarily eliminate—their students' meat consumption. Others drew on established Buddhist arguments to advocate eating only meat that one could legitimately claim had not been killed for one's own sake, or to eat meat without enjoyment, or, at a minimum, to say prayers for the dead animal.

All of these positions entail striking a balance between vegetarianism as a religious ideal and the cultural reality that many people saw full vegetarianism as either too difficult to adopt or simply as undesirable. Importantly, however, all these strategies continue to preserve vegetarianism as an ideal. They may make some practical accommodation with pro-meat perspectives, but they never lose sight of the core notion that eating meat is ethically problematic. As such, they represent strategies for navigating the tension between Buddhist ideals, perceived medical need, and alternative cultural priorities in ways that continue to insist on the primacy of Buddhist ethical thought while simultaneously allowing some meat to be consumed.

Creative Solutions

The strategies that each author used to navigate this tension are unique, so there are almost as many approaches as individual authors. Nevertheless, some broad patterns do emerge from this material, and in the pages that follow I delineate four distinct approaches to moderating the demands of vegetarianism. This breakdown, however, should not give the impression that these approaches are mutually exclusive. Indeed, many authors advocated more than one of these approaches, and some effectively suggested all of them, often arranging them in a sequence with full vegetarianism as the ideal and other practices arranged in descending order of impact. For these lamas, the goal was to minimize their students' meat consumption in whatever way they could.

Partial Vegetarianism

Perhaps the most straightforward strategy that a religious leader could employ to navigate these competing demands was to ask followers to simply reduce their meat consumption, even if they felt unable to adopt full vegetarianism. Many contemporary vegetarian lamas have advocated exactly this position, advocating a simple reduction in meat consumption without connecting that reduction to outside circumstances, such as particular holy days. In a widely publicized address on January 3, 2007, for instance, the present incarnation of the Karmapa lineage noted that "some people give up meat altogether, but some people cannot. But at least, one should reduce it."[1] Similarly, the present Dalai Lama has suggested that, in the contemporary age, when nonmeat foods are widely available, it would be best if Tibetans could at least reduce their meat consumption.[2] The Dalai Lama himself embodies such an approach, eating meat occasionally, but maintaining a vegetarian diet "most of the time."[3] Inside Tibet, lamas such as Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö have also advocated reducing meat consumption as much as possible, even if that does not entail full vegetarianism.[4] Perhaps following the advice of the Dalai Lama, Karmapa, and Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, many contemporary Tibetans told me that while they were not vegetarian per se, they did try to reduce their meat consumption. In the context of contemporary Tibetan Buddhism, therefore, it is clear that reducing one's consumption of meat is seen as a viable alternative for those who find full vegetarianism too difficult.

Interestingly, however, and despite the seemingly straightforward nature of this argument, few of the pre-communist sources I have consulted advocate simply reducing the amount of meat one eats. Pema Nyingjé Wangpo, the ninth Tai Situ incarnation, makes a passing reference to such a practice, cataloging temporary periods of vegetarianism among a set of beneficial practices: "When connected with pure aspirations, giving up meat and alcohol for a week, bathing on auspicious days, and giving beings life by ransoming them brings benefit to oneself and others."[5] Terdak Lingpa's 1689 *Rules and Regulations for Mindroling Monastery* also makes a reference to partial vegetarianism, noting that, "While we do not absolutely implement a rule of vegetarianism, it is important that festivals and the like do not have lots of meat, and that meat is not the main basis of one's diet."[6] Finally, in the early twentieth century, Dilgo Khyentsé recalls being moved after reading texts by Jigmé Lingpa that detailed animal suffering. In response, he "took a vow to eat meat only once a day."[7]

Dilgo Khyentsé makes no suggestion that his vow was novel or innovative, holding out the possibility that others in his milieu did likewise. Similarly, Pema Nyingjé Wangpo makes only passing reference to reducing meat, seeming to assume his followers were familiar with the practice. Together, these few other sources make clear that diets that reduced meat consumption without actually eliminating it did exist in pre-communist Tibet. When compared with some other approaches, however, advocating the simple reduction of meat is infrequent, casting doubt on how widespread this strategy really was.

Alternatively, some authors encouraged followers who were not up for full vegetarianism to reduce their meat consumption on days that were held to be particularly sacred or important. Tibet hosts an elaborate astrological tradition that is used to govern many aspects of daily life. Among other aspects of this tradition, certain dates are widely believed to be more auspicious than other dates. Actions undertaken on auspicious days are more likely to be successful, and meritorious conduct performed on these days accumulates more positive karma than the same act done on inauspicious days.[8]

Given the ability of such holy days to magnify both positive and negative karma, it is not surprising that many Tibetans would avoid meat on particularly powerful days. Like partial vegetarianism, this is widely promoted by contemporary advocates of vegetarianism. To give only one example, a text message that was circulating throughout Kham in early June 2012 and which, though unsigned, was widely attributed to Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, asked readers to reflect that it was almost Saga Dawa, the holiday that commemorates the Buddha's life, enlightenment, and death. Saga Dawa is a particularly powerful holiday, and the text message emphasized the need for compassion toward others at that time, concluding, "During Saga Dawa, we must not eat meat as much as possible."[9]

Again, however, despite the contemporary popularity of avoiding meat on Saga Dawa and other auspicious days, there are surprisingly few references to such practices from the pre-communist period. In the thirteenth century, the second Karmapa hierarch claims to have convinced the Mongol Emperor Möngke to ban meat consumption during the days of the new, full, and quarter moons each month.[10] Similarly, Könchok Tenpé Rabgyé's *Oceanic History of Amdo* recalls that in 1754, the abbot of Kumbum Monastery "abolished [the custom] of distributing meat donations during the celebration of Tsongkhapa's anniversary and of the New Year."[11] These few references show that avoiding meat on particularly powerful days was not unknown in pre-communist Tibet. As with simply reducing one's meat consumption, however, these are only a few passing references to such a strategy, leaving it unclear how common this practice really was.

Other practitioners adopted vegetarianism during periods of particularly dedicated practice. Some prominent examples of this can be found in *The Blue Annals*, Gö Lotsawa's encyclopedic, fifteenth-century history of Buddhism in Tibet. This text recalls numerous lamas who abandoned meat during extended periods of retreat, sometimes coupling the practice with the ascetic discipline of eating only once a day.[12] Likewise, Dilgo Khyentsé, who we have just seen took a vow to eat meat only once a day, adopted full vegetarianism during a strict retreat that lasted five or six years.[13] In these instances, it is clear that vegetarianism—or, in Dilgo Khyentsé's case, full vegetarianism—is adopted only during periods of intensive meditation and ritual practice.

In another strategy for reducing meat consumption without actually eliminating it, some lamas claimed that only some categories of people should be expected to adopt vegetarianism. This position is implicit in many texts that regulate monastic conduct, where monks are told to avoid meat with the clear assumption that laypeople are excused from this requirement. More explicitly, Jigmé Lingpa's *Autobiography* makes clear that he expected more from educated religious professionals than from laypeople. "They are worldly people," he says about of a group of villagers, "so they do not recognize that all beings were their mothers. Thus they are able to kill them. But how can we dharma practitioners eat it without incurring a fault?"[14] Jigmé Lingpa here clearly distinguishes those who understand basic Buddhist ethics from those who do not, and vegetarianism is required only of the former.

Along similar lines, it is instructive to recall *The Chronicle of Padma*, Orgyen Lingpa's fourteenth-century treasure text. As discussed extensively in chapter 2, Orgyen Lingpa asserts that monks should not eat meat, while mantrins, professional religious practitioners who do not take monastic vows, are allowed to eat whatever they like: "For thirst, monks should only drink milk and tea. For food, they may eat grain, molasses, honey and cheese. . . . They may not consume black, polluted foods like beer and meat. Mantrins . . . can eat whatever they enjoy, as long as it is not poison."[15] For Orgyen Lingpa, himself a mantrin, vegetarianism was exclusively for those who had taken monastic ordination. This does not necessarily reflect a difference in religious knowledge or dedication, but nevertheless distinguishes those who should and should not be vegetarian through reference to social categories.

All these strategies serve to restrict the demands of vegetarianism, reducing it from an ongoing requirement to one that can be applied only sporadically, or that is only necessary for certain groups. By so doing, these authors considerably reduce the difficulty associated with vegetarianism, making such a diet practical for a broader section of the population. As I have noted already, however, it is unclear how widely such partially vegetarian diets were actually promoted or practiced. It is quite possible that many individuals read the broader arguments against meat and, deciding that full vegetarianism was too difficult, adopted some variation on partial vegetarianism, even though the authors of those works did not specifically promote such a diet. It is also possible, however, that in pre-communist Tibet vegetarianism may have been more of an all-or-nothing diet than it is at present, when many lamas explicitly promote, and thereby legitimize, partial vegetarian diets.

Separating Meat and Killing

Whether these strategies for partial vegetarianism were widespread or not, they all required participants to actually reduce the amount of meat they consumed. Other strategies for navigating the tension between religious ideals and cultural norms, however, did not require any actual changes in diet. Some lamas, for instance, advised followers to avoid any meat that had been killed specifically for them, often citing the rule of threefold purity. This rule, discussed at length in the second chapter of this book, is based on canonical Vinaya texts, and says that monks are allowed to eat any meat that they reasonably believe was not killed for their personal consumption. As the sixteenth-century Sakya master Ngawang Chödrak explains, "If one has not seen, heard, or suspected that the meat was killed specifically for you, then it is called 'meat with threefold purity.' "[16]

Given its grounding in the Vinaya corpus, the rule of threefold purity carries broad currency in Tibetan monastic communities and seems to have been frequently used to defend meat eating in general. The seminal Geluk master Khedrup Jé, for instance, argues at length that meat that has threefold purity is acceptable, as the consumer bears no responsibility for the death of the animal.[17] For many pro-vegetarian authors, however, the rule of threefold purity was something of a chimera. Shabkar, for one, insists that since Tibetan monks do not usually beg for food, instead buying their meat directly from butchers, there really is no such thing as meat with threefold purity.[18] The rule of threefold purity, in Shabkar's view, should not be used to justify eating meat on a normal, day-to-day basis.

In other contexts, however, it is clear that meat with threefold purity is a better option than eating meat with no concern for its source at all. Even Shabkar, who largely rejects the rule of threefold purity as an excuse used to justify immoral behavior, sees it as superior to simply eating meat as if nothing at all is wrong. "If you are not able to give meat up," he says in his *Collected Songs*, "eat meat that has threefold purity, free of having been seen, heard or suspected."[19] Here, Shabkar makes clear that full vegetarianism is the best solution, but that if that is not possible, then eating meat with threefold purity is better than forgetting the issue entirely.

A somewhat stricter variant on this theme is to eat only meat that comes from animals that have died a natural death. There are numerous ways, after all, in which animals might die accidentally, including lightning strikes, wolf or bear attacks, or simple accidents, though meat that came from diseased or elderly animals was often considered unhealthy. During one period of fieldwork, I watched a female yak die while calving; within a few hours the corpse had been butchered and distributed around the village. At another time, a semi-nomadic villager told me that twenty or thirty animals could be killed during a single summer lightning storm. Such animals were obviously not killed for anyone's consumption, and their meat was, therefore, allowed under even the strictest interpretations of the rule of threefold purity. As the early twentieth-century Bön master Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen explains in his *Distinguishing the Three Vows*, "eating [naturally dead meat] is allowed, because it is like mountain herbs."[20]

It is worth noting that in at least some instances, the "accidents" that befell these animals may not always have been accidental. Geoff Childs reports, for instance, that Tibetans living in northern Nepal used "falling off a cliff" as a euphemism for slaughter. He recalls one conversation in which a herder whispers to a friend, "That mottled yak of mine is going to fall off a cliff tomorrow. Are you guys in for a quarter?"[21] Despite the presence of euphemisms like this one, however, it is clear that in some cases individuals, and possibly communities, really did rely solely (or at least primarily) on the meat of animals that died naturally. Shardza's *Biography*, for instance, claims, "With the exception of the meat of cattle that died naturally, he completely abandoned slaughtered meat and dedicated meat."[22] It seems unlikely that such meat would have been plentiful enough to serve as a daily staple, but it could have served as an occasional supplement to a diet that consisted primarily of tsampa and dairy.

If eating only naturally dead meat represented a strict interpretation of the rule of threefold purity, the practice of eating meat purchased in the market was a decidedly more liberal take on the same principle. Here, the assumption is that since the butcher did not kill the animal with a specific recipient in mind, it fulfills the requirements of threefold purity and anyone can eat it without fault. The butcher receives negative karma and social opprobrium, but the buyer is understood to bear no responsibility. In contemporary Tibet, this interpretation of threefold purity is widespread and is the most common justification given for monks eating meat. In precommunist times as well, this interpretation of threefold purity also seems to have been widespread, judging only by the frequency with which it is critiqued. For while many vegetarian lamas accepted that naturally dead meat was acceptable, few interpreted the rule of threefold purity so loosely as to allow meat that had been purchased in the market. As discussed in chapter 2, these figures understood that butchers only slaughtered animals if they had buyers. Shabkar makes this point clearly in his *Nectar of Immortality*: "Monks buy as much meat as can be slaughtered. The killers and buyers, working in dependence on each other, directly kill thousands of goats, sheep and other beings. If this is meat with threefold purity and does not involve a fault, then these people must all have gone where everything is all-encompassing purity!"[23]

Despite this general condemnation of market meat, however, many of these same figures agreed that eating market meat was better than eating meat you had slaughtered yourself. Shardza, for instance, argues that meat is an unfortunate but necessary part of human life. Individuals, however, should only "eat meat that has died naturally at the end of its time or that was purchased in the market."[24] For Shardza and others, market meat is not a good option, but it is better than eating meat uncritically, without thinking about it at all.

Finally, in a move similar to the emphasis on market meat, some Tibetans ate only meat that had been dead for a while, rejecting freshly slaughtered meat. The *Biography* of the fifteenth-century female master Chökyi Drönma exemplifies this practice, explaining that "since she had great compassion, she would never have fresh butter and yogurt before the calves were fed. She would only eat old meat, she would never eat fresh."[25] As with ideas surrounding market meat, the idea here is to create some distance between the act of killing and the consumption of the meat, with an implied reduction in culpability on the part of the consumer. Also like market meat, few pro-vegetarian authors accepted that old meat was truly allowable, though many suggested it was better than fresh meat.[26]

Across the board, all these strategies serve to create some degree of separation between the act of killing and the consumption of meat, reducing personal culpability for the death of the animal. In the case of naturally dead meat, this separation is complete, and the person can legitimately claim to be blameless in the death of the animal. For market meat and old meat, the separation is less clear, dependent on contentious interpretations of threefold purity. Even those figures who refused to accept that market meat or old meat was truly acceptable, however, were often willing to accept that such meat was better than just eating whatever meat one could come across. Once again, while these religious leaders clearly felt that full vegetarianism was the best option, they were willing to accept alternate diets that allowed some meat consumption while maintaining an awareness that eating it was morally problematic.

Bitter Medicine

In addition to these questions of how much and what type of meat was permissible, several lamas also asked their followers to pay attention to the attitude they brought to their meals. As discussed in chapter 5, many authors otherwise supportive of vegetarianism made allowances in cases of medical need. Meat, they almost universally acknowledged, has real medicinal value. But it also tastes good, and these authors recognized the danger that people could use their belief in the medical necessity of meat to justify a diet that, if people were honest with themselves, was actually driven by desire. Thus, these authors were careful to separate meat consumed as medicine from meat consumed out of desire for its pleasant taste.

To make this distinction clear, these authors asked that, if their readers felt it was necessary to eat meat, they should eat it with a sense of regret and sadness. Need, rather than desire, should be the motivating factor. As the fifteenth-century Bön master Nyamé Sherab Gyeltsen puts it in his *Commentary on the Received Vinaya*, "Though the sick are allowed to eat it in order to support their life force, you must abandon eating yak flesh out of desire for its fatty taste!"[27] One powerful way to make this point was to ask those who were about to eat meat to think of it not as the flesh of an animal, but as the flesh of one's own child. As discussed in chapter 3, this argument draws on the idea that, given the infinite number of lives each individual has lived, they were, at some point in the past, related to every other being they might encounter now. The sixteenth-century master Karma Chakmé makes this point clearly: "Since there are no beings who have not been our mother or father, this is our parent's meat. Since there are no beings who have not been our kinsmen, this is the meat of our child."[28]

If meat has to be eaten, these authors argue, one should eat it purely out of extreme need, without any sense of desire or enjoyment, just as a parent might eat the flesh of their dead child. Khedrup Jé explains this well: "Before you eat, think that this [meat] is filthy, arising from the semen and blood of a father and mother. See this being, which has been your parent since beginningless time, as your only child. Therefore, it is inappropriate to eat this meat—which resembles the meat of your child—because of craving. Think carefully about the inappropriateness of this food."[29] If an individual's health situation or other circumstances really are so bad that one would eat the flesh of one's dead child, Khedrup Jé and others argue, then eating meat can be considered acceptable. In such circumstances, no joy or pleasure would be derived from the meat, only the needed sustenance. Nor does this concern apply only to questions of medical, nutritional need. Many authors were also concerned that people would use religious arguments to justify their consumption of meat, when all they really wanted was to enjoy its taste. We may recall from chapter 4 that while the nineteenth-century master Patrül Rinpoché admitted that the five meats are a necessary part of the tantric feast ritual, he was strongly critical of those who used this as an excuse to satisfy their own desire. "Eating [the five meats] wantonly in towns, because you are attached to the taste of meat," he argued, "is the fault known as 'behaving carelessly with the tantric vow of consumption' "[30] For Patrül, consuming the five meats out of desire, rather than pure religious intent, took a religious sacrament and turned it into something sinful.

By asking that those who eat meat do so with a sense of sadness and regret, these authors insist that consumers do not forget that meat causes harm to animals, and is, therefore, sinful. Individuals may believe meat to be necessary for one reason or another, but that does not mean one can set aside all moral considerations. Meat remains strongly negative and should only be eaten with an attitude that reflects this understanding. By insisting on such an approach, these authors employ a strategy that allows individuals to continue to eat meat while still recognizing the moral issues such a diet entails. Like partial vegetarianism, or insisting on some form of separation between the act of killing and the consumption of meat, this strategy attempts to navigate the tension between Buddhistic morality and cultural perceptions that meat is necessary to human life.

Prayers and Mantras

Another strategy many pro-vegetarian authors suggested was to say specific prayers before eating an animal. These prayers did not change the fact that an animal had been killed, but they could help ameliorate some of the negative consequences of that death. Several prayers composed specifically for this purpose have survived, and all are grounded in the recognition that eating meat causes the animal to suffer. Karma Chakmé makes this point clearly in the opening lines of his prayer, asking the practitioner to recite, "Alas! This being, killed for the sake of meat, has been my old mother for many lifetimes and deserves compassion."[31]

Having reflected on the suffering the animal has undergone, these prayers then seek to create some benefit for the animal by helping it to achieve a better rebirth. Jigmé Lingpa explains this process in his *Engaging the Path of Enlightenment*, where he asks someone about to eat meat to reflect first that the animal in question was once their mother. At that point, he claims, "Your heart will break, and you will necessarily develop compassion towards the animal."[32] "Without decreasing the power of that thought," he continues, "recite the *kaṃkani*, the 'crown torma' prayer, and the essential 'liberation upon wearing' prayer.[33] Say these as many times as you can. Then blow on the meat, thinking about it and making strong prayers."[34] Through this process, Jigmé Lingpa suggests, the person can create a connection between the force of their own compassion and the animal itself, leading the animal to a better future state. If such prayers are performed appropriately, Karma Chakmé claims, "the animal will be liberated from the lower realms."[35]

In addition to somewhat ameliorating the animal's suffering, these prayers also benefit the person doing the eating. As discussed in chapter 3, many Tibetan religious leaders assumed that eating meat carried heavy karmic consequences for the consumer, including the threat of birth in hell. By expressing regret for their actions and saying prayers, however, individuals could reduce the karmic consequences of their diet. Those who recite Karmé Khenpo's *Prayer to Purify Eating Meat*, for instance, request that they be, "cleansed and purified of the sin and defilement of eating meat."[36] Notably, Karmé Khenpo does not limit his prayer to the consumer him or herself, but also asks that all who are connected to the meal be purified. "Lead the slaughtered animal to a pureland," he prays, "And may the butcher who did the killing not [experience the karmic result of their actions by] being killed themselves."[37]

Using prayers to mitigate the negativity associated with eating meat also shows up in Tibetan biographical literature. Jigmé Lingpa, for instance, recalls in his *Wondrous Ocean of Advice for Solitary Retreat*, that while he ate meat during two periods of retreat he performed as a young man, he used prayers to offset some of the negativity. “At lunchtime,” he recalls, “I blew many special mantras on the meat, generated compassion, and made aspiration prayers.”[38] Jigmé Lingpa does not elaborate on why he does this, or on what impact he expects it to have. Given his comments elsewhere, however, we may presume that he did so in order to mitigate some of the suffering the animal went through, as well as his own karmic culpability for that suffering.

While prayers such as these seem to allow individuals to turn their meat eating into something positive, it is worth noting that many Tibetan lamas doubted both their sincerity and their effectiveness. In a biting critique, Shabkar asserts, “Compassion like this, [reciting mantras] after the animals is killed and the meat is eaten, is like playing at prayer. Those who do so may appear lovely in the eyes of laypeople, but when examined, their intention and behavior is neither suitable nor helpful.”[39] For Shabkar and many others, there was a real concern that reciting prayers to benefit the dead animal might easily become an attempt to whitewash negative behavior, allowing individuals to both eat meat and feel good about it afterward. And if that happened, if the prayers were merely repeated pro forma, and without genuine regret, then they would become ineffective, benefiting neither the animal nor the consumer.

Hierarchies of Practice

Despite these misgivings, however, many of these same figures continued to promote the use of prayer as an option that was not as good as actual vegetarianism but that was better than nothing at all. Few of the authors discussed in this chapter, in fact, saw strategies such as reducing one’s meat consumption, eating only meat with threefold purity, eating with regret, and saying prayers before eating as ideal solutions. They were all worse than full vegetarianism, but better than eating meat wantonly, with no reflection or concern for its impact on the animal. Some authors went so far as to articulate a scale in which these various strategies are ranked from most to least effective. In his *Collected Songs*, for instance, Shabkar lays out just such a tiered structure, with vegetarianism as the ideal, threefold purity and prayers a level down, and simply thinking compassionately as the bare minimum:

> If you are able, cut off all meat. If, however, you are not able to give it up, eat meat that has threefold purity, free of having been seen, heard or suspected. When you eat such faultless food, recite whatever mantras you know, such as the *kaṃkani*, and then blow on the meat. Then there will be benefit after it is eaten. Meditate on this animal with great compassion. After eating, recite as many *maṇi* mantras as you can.[40] It is good to offer dedication prayers. Less than this, [just] think along these lines.[41]

Nor was Shabkar the only Tibetan author to explicitly create such a tiered structure of practices surrounding vegetarianism. Writing two centuries earlier, Karma Chakmé had created a similar structure for his own ideas surrounding meat eating:

> The best option is to perform the holy act of relinquishing all meat. . . . Mediocre is to give up meat that was slaughtered directly for you, or, if you eat other meat, to eat only a little. As a minimum, give up the meat of animals killed that day, meat of animals of a similar species, and human meat. . . . Give rise to great compassion, purifying the animal's obscurations through prayers and mantras and the names of Buddhas.[42]

The details of Karma Chakmé's structure differ somewhat from Shabkar's. Both hold up vegetarianism as an ideal, and both encourage eating only meat with threefold purity as one step down from that. While Shabkar's base level is simply to reflect on the animal with compassion, however, Karma Chakmé is more elaborate, establishing a minimum level of practice that includes both refusing fresh meat and the recitation of prayers. Despite the differences in their details, both Shabkar and Karma Chakmé create systems that continue to encourage vegetarianism as the preeminent practice, but that also offer options for those who feel they are unable to rise to such a rigorous standard.

Creative Tension

In *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, Wendy Doniger uses the phrase "creative tension" to depict internal tensions within Hinduism. In one instance, this phrase describes the relationship between Hinduism's polytheistic and monistic tendencies.[43] In another, it refers to the sometimes-fraught relationship between those Hindus who renounce the world and those who embrace it.[44] In Doniger's analysis, these tensions—never fully resolved—prompted Hindu thinkers to creatively interpret their tradition. Rather than derailing it, the presence of these unresolved tensions pushed the tradition to broader innovation. A similar situation surrounded the debates over meat in Tibet. As this chapter has shown, Tibetan lamas developed a variety of strategies in an attempt to resolve the tensions that surrounded meat eating. Sometimes these strategies had canonical precedent. The rule of threefold purity, employed by some Tibetans to create distance between the meat that is eaten and the actual killing of the animal, is found in the Vinaya.[45] And in the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, the Buddha notes that while vegetarianism is ideal, it is also difficult, and he does not want followers to abandon his path entirely because of this difficulty. Here, it seems, vegetarianism was appropriate for some audiences but not others.[46]

The actual deployment of these strategies by Tibetan religious leaders, however, goes well beyond any precedent found in canonical texts such as these. Instead, the strategies discussed in this chapter represent attempts to respond to specifically Tibetan concerns. Tibetan leaders could, and did, draw on canonical texts to support the idea of vegetarianism itself, but their cultural context differed dramatically from that found in India.[47] The solutions they came up with, therefore, reflect a creative application of traditional, Indic Buddhist ideals to the lived context of the Tibetan plateau. The question of meat was never a settled—or simple—issue in Tibet, a fact that spurred a variety of attempts to promote vegetarianism while also acknowledging the difficulty of adopting such a diet.

At the Intersection of Religion and Culture

By suggesting these various strategies, whether piecemeal or arranged hierarchically, these authors all recognized that many Tibetans felt full vegetarianism was impossible. They recognized, in other words, the complex tension surrounding the question of meat eating. In my own analysis, presented over the course of this book, I have isolated three basic strands governing that tension: (1) Buddhist ideals that see meat as deeply problematic, (2) perceived medical need, and (3) non-Buddhist aspects of Tibetan culture that promoted meat as a positive part of life. The Tibetan authors I have relied on did not articulate the tension in the same terms as I have. However, by promoting alternative strategies that allowed people to continue eating meat while also perpetuating a sense of meat's moral problems, these authors expressed a recognition of—and an attempt to navigate—the broad contours of this tension.

Importantly, all the strategies discussed in this chapter preserve vegetarianism as an ideal. Anyone reading Shabkar or Karma Chakmé's texts would know that rejecting meat entirely was the preferred option, and that other practices were appropriate only for those unable to rise to a fully vegetarian diet. Actually implementing these lesser practices, however, served to reinforce the importance of vegetarianism. Even saying prayers over meat, among the lowest practices in Karma Chakmé's system, forced a practitioner to maintain an awareness of animal suffering and their own role in perpetuating that suffering. Karma Chakmé's *Prayer* and Karmé Khenpo's *Prayer* are each three pages long. Reciting either one takes close to a minute, even when done quickly. Doing so does not necessarily change the number of animals killed for food, but reciting either prayer before each meal does force the practitioner to reflect repeatedly on the faults of eating meat. By composing prayers like these, and by promoting the other strategies described in this chapter, these authors attempted to navigate the tensions that surrounded meat eating in Tibet, accommodating their students' perceived needs while simultaneously insisting on the moral superiority of a vegetarian diet.

Individuals, of course, took their pick among these strategies, navigating between religious priorities, health concerns, and alternative cultural ideals. In illustrating the role of individual sentiment on this issue, we might recall the twelfth-century master Jigten Sumgön, a lifelong vegetarian. At the end of his life, doctors prepared a broth that included "the dried and powdered lungs of a northern yak," claiming that this would help his illness and prolong his life.[48] Despite the entreaties of his disciples, however, Jigten Sumgön refused even this minimal amount of meat, solely prepared as medicine. By contrast, when Sera Khandro, also a long-term vegetarian, became seriously ill, she followed the advice of her religious master and ate meat for a month.[49] The circumstances differ, of course, but it is clear that each of these individuals tried to navigate competing ideals, balancing their commitment to vegetarianism with their understanding of the value of medicinal meat. The fact that they were able to come to opposite conclusions on the matter underscores the degree to which individuals had to make their own choices when it came to the question of meat.

The fact that this was a personal decision, however, should not obscure the fact that there were definite trends in terms of time and place. Orgyen Lingpa, for instance, restricted his advocacy of vegetarianism to ordained monks, explicitly excusing mantrins from any requirement to avoid meat.[50] As discussed in the first chapter, Orgyen Lingpa was typical for his time, when vegetarianism was largely a monastic phenomenon. By the nineteenth century, on the other hand, strict vegetarianism was relatively widespread among Bön and Nyingma mantrins. Monks still adopted the diet, but so did mantrins and even some devout laity. Clearly the expectations had shifted. The fact that this was a socially embedded diet does not obviate the role of individual choice and agency. With a few possible exceptions (Ngor Monastery comes to mind) it seems unlikely that vegetarianism was ever truly required at any particular time or place, instead always remaining an individual decision. The factors that individuals considered when making decisions about how much and what kind of meat to eat, however, included local trends and expectations as well as broader tensions between religious ethics, health, and nonreligious ideals.

Further, decisions about whether or not to eat meat were not simply questions of personal morality. They also carried powerful social connotations, serving as something of an index to larger lifestyle choices. Meat, as discussed extensively in chapter 6, carried strong associations with wealth and heroic masculinity. Eating it—especially in public, such as at a festival—was a way to publicly demonstrate one's claim to embody these ideals. Conversely, rejecting meat and adopting vegetarianism, or even partial vegetarianism, was to publicly reject these ideals and instead lay claim to religious legitimacy. In both cases, the meat itself serves as a symbol for a broader orientation. In the second chapter of this book I mentioned a young monk in Degé who told me, "When I hear a monk is vegetarian, then I know he is a good monk." While vegetarianism itself was important to this monk, it also served as a marker of a monk's broader commitment to religious ethics, a proof that he was willing to place religious ideals above his own pleasure.

In summary, the question of vegetarianism in pre-communist Tibet lay at the intersection of an assortment of competing demands. Meat was widely acknowledged as sinful by religious authorities, but also carried positive connotations for a broad swath of the population, often including those same religious authorities. Individuals had to navigate this tension, drawing their own boundaries around what was acceptable to eat, and when. Whatever stance a particular person chose to ultimately adopt, however, each needed to somehow reconcile the competing demands of Buddhistic ethics and other cultural demands.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this book, I outlined two broad goals. The first was simply to demonstrate that vegetarianism existed in Tibet and that it was an important aspect of Tibetan religiosity, worthy of scholarly analysis. This goal has now, I believe, been accomplished. While vegetarianism never became normative across the Tibetan plateau, I have demonstrated that it was a consistent presence, supported at one time or another by religious leaders of all traditions and of all geographical regions. More important than the limited number of individuals who actually adopted vegetarianism, debates surrounding eating meat have been a consistent feature of Tibetan religious discourse for almost a millennium, suggesting that discomfort with meat eating was widespread.

The second—and more complex—goal of this project has been to situate the theory and practice of vegetarianism in its broader social context. This aspect of the project was largely motivated by the recognition that despite the consistent religious rhetoric disparaging meat and praising vegetarianism, the diet never became normative, even for monks, mantrins, or others who dedicate their lives to practicing Buddhism. Clearly, something beyond simple religious doctrine was involved in the decision to either eat or reject meat.

In addressing this question, I have articulated three distinct perspectives on meat eating. The first focuses on Buddhist ethical norms, and asks practitioners to reject meat. The second also accepts the validity of Buddhist ethical norms but couples those reflections with a belief that meat is medically necessary for the human body. In essence, this perspective sees meat as a necessary evil. Balancing these is a third perspective that largely rejects Buddhist attitudes toward meat, drawing instead on cultural models that prioritize wealth, heroic masculinity, or both. Meat, in this perspective, is not a necessary evil, but a positive good. The question of vegetarianism, in my analysis, lies at the center of these three competing discourses.

I wish to make clear that in highlighting this three-way tension over vegetarianism, I am not advocating a view of Tibetan religion that separates it into "elite" versus "popular," "Buddhistic" versus "Shamanic," "Nibbanic" versus "kammic," or any of the other tired dichotomies that are sometimes said to characterize Tibetan religiosity. As should be clear by now, elite, literate, socially powerful religious leaders often disagreed with each other over the question of vegetarianism. On the other hand, we have also seen a persistent concern among nomads about the karma created by their lifestyle, a concern reflected in the prayers said before killing an animal, as well as the practice of hiring someone else to do the actual killing. I suspect that it was often these nomads, whose hands did the actual work of killing, who reflected most deeply on the question of eating meat. It is clear, therefore, that vegetarianism cuts across any suggestion of an elite / popular dichotomy in Tibetan religion.

Instead of shoehorning vegetarianism into an arbitrary model that seeks to describe Tibetan religions as a whole, I have tried to do the work of uncovering the debates and tensions that surrounded the specific question of vegetarianism. The result is the three-way tension discussed throughout this book. These tensions, however, were never static. Individuals and communities navigated them by incorporating aspects of all three perspectives into their approach to meat eating. Making these decisions—deciding, for instance, between religious and health concerns—could not have been easy, and the result was an upwelling of religious creativity, displayed in the many strategies that tried to incorporate all three competing concerns in one way or another.

While this book has focused on vegetarianism and the question of meat eating, I believe that this pattern of tension and creative response is emblematic of Tibetan religiosity far more broadly. Areas of tension similar to those I have described are not hard to find. The monastic expectation of celibacy, for instance, runs headlong into both innate human desires for intimacy and powerful cultural expectations that men should have children, and particularly sons, to carry on the family lineage. Shabkar's *Autobiography*, already an important source for this study of vegetarianism, also provides a striking example of the tensions surrounding the question of celibacy. Shabkar is an only son, and his mother initially refuses to allow him to become a monk, expressing concern over the fate of his lineage and wealth. She eventually consents, but as Shabkar is returning home after his ordination ceremony he is accosted by an old woman in the village. "Oh!" the old woman yells, "What a terrible thing you did! Seems like your father Tsewang Ngawang's lineage has been cut. You were not born a man!"[51] As this old grandmother walks away, she mumbles prayers to herself; clearly she is not opposed to Buddhism. And yet given Shabkar's status as an only child, she cannot accept Shabkar's rejection of family life.

Another site of conflict between religious and nonreligious ideals can be seen in the type of violence briefly discussed in chapter 6.[52] Buddhist texts and religious leaders roundly condemn most forms of violence, and yet there exists a parallel culture of heroic masculinity that celebrates violence as a natural form of male behavior. Nor are these two worlds fully separate, as some monks, particularly but not exclusively the *dobdob*, regularly engage in violence against their peers. In other instances, entire monasteries have been known to engage in violent feuds with other monasteries. Such conduct was sometimes given a thin Buddhist veneer by invoking a need to suppress deviant views, or simply to protect of the Dharma. In other cases, no justification seems to have been required. Whether justified or not, however, it is clear that this tendency toward violence intersects somewhat awkwardly with Buddhist values. As these few examples suggest, vegetarianism is not the only instance where religious ideal conflict with other cultural ideals, assumptions, and practices.

It goes without saying that the balance between the various tensions surrounding meat eating changed over time. Some communities emphasized a particular perspective at one time but then shifted their stance as social and cultural circumstances changed. And few times in Tibetan history have seen such dramatic social and cultural change as the past sixty years. The imposition of direct Chinese rule has forced Tibetan society to abandon many long-standing practices and assumptions and to adopt, over the course of only a few decades, new models and ideals. In the following epilogue, I look at how these changes have affected the debates over vegetarianism, dramatically altering the balance between religious ideals, perceived medical need, and non-Buddhist cultural models.

Epilogue

Contemporary Tibet

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER concludes this book's central concern: the place of vegetarianism and meat eating in Tibet prior to the arrival of communist Chinese military forces in the early 1950s. What remains is to bring this discussion of vegetarianism up to the present day, or at least to the nearly present day. It goes without saying that the Tibetan world has changed radically over the sixty-five years since communist forces first asserted authority on the plateau. Some of those changes have been deeply destructive to Tibetan religion and culture, while others represent new, vital ways of thinking about and practicing Buddhism. Among the latter is the remarkable rise of the contemporary vegetarian movement.

Over the course of this book, I have presented vegetarianism as a widely praised diet that was adopted relatively rarely. In many ways, both of these points are changing. For a variety of reasons, discussed below, vegetarianism has become strikingly widespread. It is not yet normative, but it is no longer uncommon. Put simply, a diet that was always marginal is now almost mainstream. Vegetarianism has become so popular that it makes sense to speak of it as a movement, championed by a growing collection of charismatic lamas and adopted by a wide cross-section of Tibetan society. At the same time, however, vegetarianism is receiving significant criticism in a way that it never did before. Prior to the communist era, the worst that someone might say of vegetarianism was that it was unnecessary. Beyond this, it seems, few felt the need to really attack or criticize the diet. In contemporary Tibet, on the other hand, some take exception to the rise of the vegetarian movement, and some are quite vocal in their displeasure. One young Tibetan man, for instance, told me, "Vegetarianism is destroying our culture."

It is worth noting at the outset that I do not intend this brief epilogue to be a complete account of the contemporary vegetarian movement. The contemporary vegetarian movement is broad-based, varies dramatically by region, and connects with many diverse aspects of contemporary Tibetan life and culture. It deserves, in other words, an entire book, or more likely several. Rather than try to present this movement in comprehensive detail, therefore, I focus on ways in which my analysis of pre-communist vegetarianism can help to understand the contemporary movement.

As I have shown throughout this book, Buddhist support for vegetarianism has long been moderated by concerns about health and by alternate cultural ideals. The rapid changes across the plateau, however, have shifted the balance between these perspectives. In particular, the introduction of Western medicine and the widespread availability of alternate foods have eroded (though certainly not eliminated) the assumption that meat is necessary for human health. This has enabled devout Buddhists to adopt a vegetarian diet with less fear for their personal health. In this epilogue, I argue that the success of the vegetarianism movement should be understood not as the emergence of a new practice, but as an adaptation of long-standing religious ideals to contemporary cultural realities.

At the same time, however, many Tibetans perceive the rise of vegetarianism and a concomitant anti-slaughter movement as threats to the economic viability of Tibetan nomadic communities. While many Tibetans celebrate the rise of vegetarianism as an expression of Buddhist practice, others see it as a threat to nomadic life. Vegetarianism has thus become caught up in a larger debate over whether Tibetan identity is, at its root, based on Buddhism or on other aspects of Tibetan culture, particularly nomadism. Vegetarianism is only one part of this discussion, but it has emerged as an important touchstone for many contemporary Tibetans, reflecting the broader changes that have affected Tibetan religiosity in past decades.

EPILOGUE

Traumatic Changes

Tibet has a long and complex history of political and religious interactions with China, of which the events of the mid- to late twentieth century are only the latest chapter. While a complete history of these relationships is well beyond the scope of this book, in the pages that follow I provide an overview of Chinese involvement in Tibet, with a particular emphasis on those parts of the story that impact the recent vegetarian movement.

Chinese involvement in Tibet dates to at least the Tang Dynasty (618–907), and probably before that.[1] By the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), this relationship included regular Chinese military intervention, such as when the Qing government sent troops to help deal with invading Nepali forces in the late eighteenth century.[2] This pattern of sporadic intervention in Tibet took a dramatic turn when, after decades of bloody civil war, the Chinese communists defeated Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist army and founded the People's Republic of China (PRC). Soon after the country's founding on October 1, 1949, the government turned its attention to solidifying control over Tibet and other far western provinces. Many Tibetans have disputed the legitimacy of that claim to sovereignty, and this present book is certainly not going to settle the issue. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that, in the eyes of Chinese officials, this was not an invasion of an independent country, but an assertion of authority over a remote but integral part of the Chinese state. Regardless of the legitimacy of this claim, the result was the influx of many thousands of Chinese soldiers into culturally Tibetan lands and the imposition of direct political control by the central authorities in Beijing.[3] Whatever its legal standing previously, from the early 1950s onward, Tibet has been firmly established as a part of the PRC.

During the first few years, relations between the Tibetan government and Chinese authorities were relatively calm, if not exactly friendly. Beijing sought to implement new policies slowly, and largely allowed Tibetan authorities to continue running the country as they had been doing.[4] By the mid-1950s, however, the government began implementing radical communist reforms, particularly during the periods known as the Democratic Reforms and Cultural Revolution.[5] For many Tibetans, these radical policies marked the end of any idea that Tibet could maintain its traditional culture more or less intact. Social hierarchies were inverted, monks and nuns were forcibly laicized, monasteries were razed, and those temples left standing were largely empty shells. Beyond the religious sphere, economic life stagnated as well. Farms and herds were collectivized, and while this did elevate some formerly poor Tibetans, overall production suffered. One result was the 1959 uprising in Lhasa, after which the Dalai Lama and many other Tibetans fled into exile, first to India and later across the world.[6] Over the course of more than fifty years of exile, this exile community has proven remarkably adept at preserving their traditional culture, reestablishing many monasteries and religious schools, and assiduously reprinting Tibetan texts. On the political front, exiled Tibetans—and particularly the Dalai Lama—have become the most visible representatives of Tibet on the world stage. Despite their small numbers (the vast majority of Tibetans continue to live inside the political boundaries of the PRC), exile communities exert a powerful influence on the trajectory taken by Tibetan culture.

Policies changed nationwide after Mao's death in 1976, disbanding collective farms and beginning the process of reform that has turned contemporary China into a world economic power. In Tibet, this meant that by the early 1980s, most farming and herding collectives had been dissolved, and their resources turned over to individual families.[7] The reform process also brought increasingly liberal attitudes toward religion. Monasteries were rebuilt, artworks commissioned, and a new generation of monks and nuns took vows. Both monastics and laity now felt free to openly practice Buddhism for the first time since the late 1950s, and the speed with which Tibet's religious infrastructure was recreated has been truly remarkable. Despite these relatively liberal attitudes toward Buddhism, however, the social and political landscape of Tibet had been irrevocably changed by the traumas and social reforms of the preceding decades. The process of reestablishing Buddhism in Tibet, therefore, was never simply one of recreating the religion as it had existed previously. Instead, Buddhist leaders of the post-reform era have struggled to fashion Buddhism into a form that speaks to modern, contemporary Tibetan culture.

While it is just one of many places where this process played out, the Larung Gar monastic complex serves to illustrate the concerns involved. Founded in 1980 by Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok, Larung Gar has become one of the most important centers for learning in contemporary Tibet and, possibly, the largest monastic community in world history.[8] As Holly Gayley has noted, Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok consciously set out to fashion a form of Buddhism that was relevant to the contemporary period.[9] "We Tibetans," Khenpo

Jigmé Püntsok declared, "should work to preserve the traditions of our ancestors so that they do not decline. . . . But we should also adopt those elements of modern society that are beneficial both now and in the future."[10] Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok was one of the forerunners of the contemporary vegetarian movement, and we return to him later in this epilogue. For now, it is sufficient to note that he (along with many other lamas of the reform period) was actively concerned with making Buddhism relevant to modern Tibetans, incorporating modern ideas that he felt were valuable while simultaneously using Buddhist values as a defense against those aspects of modernity that he saw as corrosive.

This picture of Buddhism finding its place in contemporary Tibetan society should not mask the fact that although rules regarding religion were relaxed following Mao's death, they never went away entirely. Government concern about Buddhist practice in Tibet continues, particularly when religious practitioners become involved in political protests. Major protests seeking political reforms occurred in 1987 and 1989, the latter only months before student protests in Tiananmen Square captured world attention.[11] Following these protests, which often involved monks and nuns, government policy toward Buddhism in Tibet usually became more restrictive. Monasteries were largely allowed to function, but the authorities kept a close watch, and arrests could result if they felt that the line between religion and politics had been crossed. In perhaps the most famous examples of this, there have been two waves of government-ordered destruction at Larung Gar. In 2002, Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok himself was taken into custody, and parts of Larung Gar were razed to the ground. In the summer of 2016, the government announced that Larung Gar would be limited to five thousand residents, far fewer than lived there at the time. Once again, the state demolished many of the "extra" homes. Despite this destruction, Larung Gar remained operational as of Spring 2017, when this book went to press. The threat of further state intervention remains, but for the moment the institution continues to offer classes and degrees to those monks and nuns who have been allowed to remain.

In 2008, A new wave of protests against the Chinese state swept across the plateau, perhaps the most significant since 1959. Predictably, these protests resulted in a new round of restrictions on religious and political activities. In the wake of these protests and countermeasures, a new and particularly grisly trend began on February 27, 2009, when the monk Tapey lit himself on fire to protest government policies in Tibet. Since that date, Tibetans have continued to immolate themselves with disturbing frequency. The details of some immolations are disputed, but at the time of writing at least 140 Tibetans have committed this dramatic form of protest, and many others have been arrested for supporting or memorializing the immolators.[12]

In many ways, then, the experience of the last sixty-five years in Tibet has been one of learning to live with and adapt to a constantly changing political environment, while simultaneously trying to achieve economic stability and preserve Tibetan culture. While the last few decades have brought economic progress to many, religious practice remains restricted by state policies. Despite this—or perhaps because of it—a vibrant Buddhist movement exists across the plateau. Larung Gar and institutions like it continue to educate a new generation of scholars and practitioners, and laity across the plateau continue to engage in public and private religious practice, often in novel ways. The emergence of a widespread vegetarian movement is among these shifts.

The Vegetarian Movement

While vegetarianism never became normative in pre-communist Tibet, it did experience periods of relative popularity. One of those took place in Kham, beginning in the early nineteenth century and continuing into the 1950s. Throughout this time, as detailed in the first chapter of this book, important religious leaders of all sectarian divisions personally rejected meat and asked their students to do likewise. The Democratic Reforms and Cultural Revolution largely put an end to this, along with most other aspects of religious practice. Beyond the persecution of overt religious practice, these policies also ushered in ill-advised agricultural reforms that caused widespread famine. As one survivor noted, “They used senseless farming practices opposed to science.[13] Though they planted the fields, they did not ripen. The people were exhausted, and their bodies weakened. Many living beings died during this ruthless famine.”[14]

Given both the overt restrictions on religious practice and the difficulty of finding any food at all, it is not surprising that few people concerned themselves with trying to avoid meat during this time. This backgrounding of concern about meat was not quite universal, however. One lama told me that his teacher, a now deceased Sakya master named Lama Sangyé, maintained a vegetarian diet throughout the years of the Democratic Reforms and Cultural Revolution. More intriguingly, an elderly Nyingma lama from the Nangchen region told me that he, his father, and his elder brother (all of whom were religious leaders) had all maintained a vegetarian diet through the entire period of Maoist excesses, despite the fact that all three spent much of this time in reform-through-labor camps. He admitted that he had often been hungry, and that while meat was often completely unavailable, there were times when he was tempted to break his vegetarian diet, though in the end he did not do so. These figures, however, seem to be exceptional, and my overall sense of this period is that religious concerns such as vegetarianism were pushed to the background. Most people ate whatever they could find.

Despite the strength of vegetarianism in Kham during the pre-communist period, therefore, it is difficult to directly connect the contemporary revival to the practices of that period. Rather, the roots of the present movement can be found in the activity of a new generation of charismatic leaders that emerged in the 1980s, and whose concern for animal welfare emerged strongly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In Kham, the most significant of these figures is Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok, mentioned previously as the founder of Larung Gar and as one of the chief luminaries of the post-Mao Buddhist revival in Tibet. Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok was not himself a vegetarian.[15] But in an emotional plea delivered in the year 2000, he asked his followers to avoid slaughtering their animals.[16] Video recordings of this speech are widely distributed across the plateau (although they are particularly popular in Kham), often merging Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok's words with gruesome videos of animal slaughter.[17] The anti-slaughter movement that Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok helped spark is conceptually distinct from the vegetarian movement, and many of those who now refuse to slaughter their animals continue to eat meat they purchase in the marketplace.[18] Nevertheless, both movements are driven by a concern with animal suffering, and many Tibetans told me that they adopted vegetarianism after watching videos of Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok describing the suffering animals undergo in the slaughter process.

Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok's concern for animal suffering has been developed further by his disciple and spiritual heir at Larung Gar, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö. Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, whose 2003 denunciation of meat served as the opening vignette for this book, became vegetarian in 1998. He has since released several video recordings of his own teachings about meat, often incorporating Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok's previous statements as well as images of

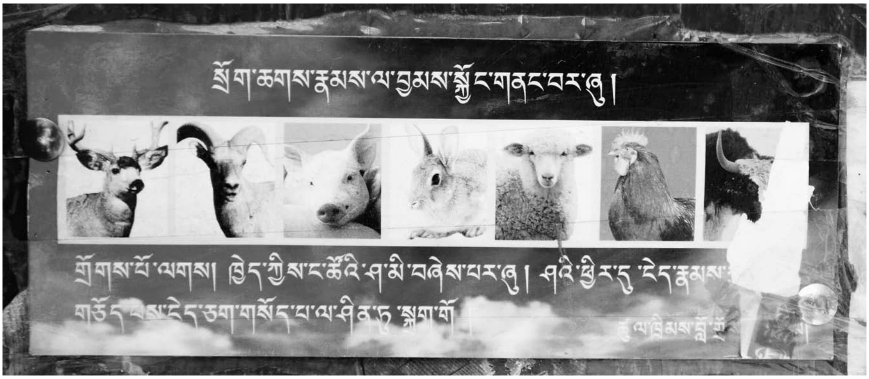

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FIGURE 8.1 Anti-meat flier produced by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö and widely distributed across Kham. The text reads, "Cherish all living creatures. Friends, please don't eat our flesh! They separate us from our lives for the sake of meat, so we are very afraid of butchers. Composed by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö." Photo by the author.

animal slaughter. He has also released a collection of texts on vegetarianism, as well as numerous fliers and posters, all of which explicitly ask followers to reject meat eating (figure 8.1).[19] Across Kham, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö is widely perceived as the foremost proponent of vegetarianism, to the point that whenever I asked about vegetarianism, most of those I spoke with immediately pointed me in his direction.

Under the influence of Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö and a broad assortment of other religious leaders, vegetarianism has rapidly achieved a level of popularity that it had never known previously. The speed with which the movement has spread can be seen in changing patterns at Dzogchen Monastery's Sri Singha Monastic College. Monks at Sri Singha eat their meals communally, served from three large vats of stew. When I first visited in 2007, two of these vats contained meat, while one was vegetarian. When I visited again in 2012, all three vats were vegetarian, and I was told that monks were not even allowed to have meat in their own rooms. Similarly, in 2007 few restaurants would offer vegetarian options. Five years later, many restaurants had entire sections of their menus dedicated to vegetarian fare (figure 8.2). Finally, in a reflection of the buying power Tibetan vegetarians now wield, Chinese-owned food companies now market vegetarian products specifically to Tibetans.

Although travel and other restrictions on my research make me less familiar with the situation in Central Tibet and Amdo than in Kham, it is clear

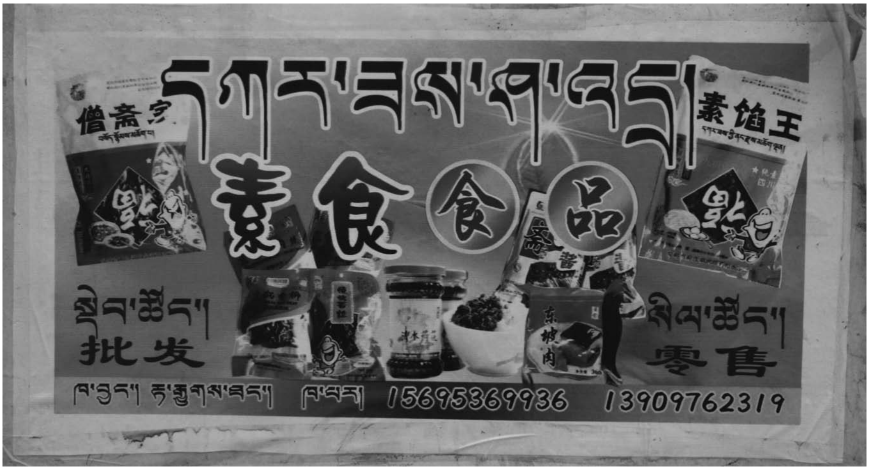

FIGURE 8.2 Advertisement for snacks made of imitation meat. Jyekundo, summer 2012. Photo by the author.

that a vibrant vegetarian community exists in these regions as well.[20] In 2004, Rasé Könchok Gyatso, a senior scholar of the Drikung Kagyü based just east of Lhasa at Drigung Til Monastery, published *The Benefits of Being Vegetarian*, a short but vivid text denigrating meat and extolling vegetarianism.[21] I have been told that, at least in part under Rasé Könchok Gyatso's influence, several purely vegetarian restaurants exist in Lhasa, and that other restaurants often feature sections of their menus specifically dedicated to vegetarian food, as I have observed in Kham. Further fieldwork is necessary to confirm the strength of the vegetarian movement there, but it is clear that questions over meat eating are discussed in contemporary Central Tibet as well as in Kham.

Vegetarianism is also present in the northeastern region of Amdo. Larung Gar, the monastic home of both Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok and Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, is located on the border between Kham and Amdo, and the influence of these figures has permeated Amdo almost as much as it has Kham. Katia Buffetrille has noted the controversial nature of vegetarianism in Amdo, with online commentators specifically linking the discussion with Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö's ideas.[22] While limited compared with my fieldwork in Kham, my time in Amdo suggests that while the vegetarian movement there is not as strong as it is in Kham, it is nevertheless present and gaining force. Tibetans there were aware of vegetarianism as a possibility, and several spoke of relatives who had adopted the diet. Fewer, however, seemed to have thought about the issue as seriously as those I spoke with in Kham had. Because my fieldwork has been focused on Kham, this discussion of the vegetarian movement in Central Tibet and Amdo must remain somewhat brief and tentative. Nevertheless, it is clear that while other researchers will have to uncover the nuances of vegetarianism in these regions, vegetarianism has emerged as an important part of Tibetan culture across the plateau.

In addition to these influences inside Tibet, lamas in the exile Tibetan community, particularly the Dalai Lama and Karmapa, have also powerfully influenced the vegetarian movement. While the Dalai Lama is widely understood to eat meat for health reasons, he has praised vegetarianism on several occasions, encouraging his followers to adopt it whenever possible.[23] Further, his 2006 statements against the wearing of tiger, leopard, and other endangered animal skins prompted a plateau-wide movement rejecting such skins.[24] Like the anti-slaughter movement, this anti-fur movement is distinct from the vegetarian movement. Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama's statements brought new popular attention to issues of animal suffering. Recordings of the Dalai Lama's teachings on this and other issues are technically illegal in Tibet (along with photographs and other references to the exile leader), but they remain widely available. The Dalai Lama is deeply revered by wide swaths of Tibetan society, and his support for vegetarianism has been a powerful force for the movement.

Like the Dalai Lama, the present Karmapa[25] has also spoken frequently and forcefully on vegetarianism, promoting it as a diet that is both ethically and environmentally sound.[26] Also like the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa's statements on eating meat are widely available in Tibet, both in print and video format. Unlike the Dalai Lama, however, the Karmapa is well known to be a vegetarian himself, a difference that adds weight to his arguments and that was widely noted by several Tibetans. Between them, these two figures have lent their considerable moral weight to the vegetarian movement, an influence that is particularly pronounced for members of the Geluk and Karma Kagyü traditions. Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö is primarily associated with the Nyingma, and his influence is most pronounced at institutions associated with this lineage. At Geluk and Karma Kagyü monasteries, traditionally headed by the Dalai Lama and Karmapa, respectively, monks and nuns were more likely to cite these exile figures as the reason their institutions did not serve meat.

In making their arguments, all these figures echo concerns discussed throughout this book. They note, for instance, that animals—like humans—do not want to suffer. Rasé Könchok Gyatso makes this point clearly in his short work, *The Benefits of Being Vegetarian*:

> Among the beings in this world, it is very hard to find one that does not cherish life, that does not avoid hurting itself, or that is not afraid. All beings are the same in cherishing life and being aware of happiness and suffering. . . . So do not separate animals as "other," but always treat them with equality. Thus, [the Buddha] teaches that it is inappropriate to harm any being that experiences itself as alive and embodied, even an insect.[27]

Published in 2004, this passage is nonetheless reminiscent of many earlier works, which, as we have seen, almost universally draw connections between the suffering experienced by animals and humans.

Similarly, some current authors also argue that eating meat cannot be separated from the act of slaughter, insisting that those who eat meat have a moral culpability for the death of the animal. Again, Rasé Könchok Gyatso makes this point well: "The existence of meat-eaters is the causal condition for butchers killing animals."[28] This is a familiar argument, repeated throughout generations of Tibetan texts. Further, in making these arguments, contemporary lamas draw on and cite the same texts that earlier authors did. In his *Clear Mirror of What to Accept and Reject*, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö cites an extensive collection of scriptural sources on meat, including extensive passages from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, and the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Beyond such canonical texts, he also cites many texts written by earlier generations of Tibetan thinkers, such as Nyakla Pema Düdül, Shabkar, and many others.[29] Throughout these works, in fact, contemporary authors repeat the same arguments and cite the same sources as pre-communist authors.

Finally, the connections between pre-communist vegetarian authors and members of the contemporary movement go beyond the arguments on the page to encompass broader concerns as well. Like earlier authors, many contemporary advocates of vegetarianism respect what they perceive to be the difficulty of maintaining a vegetarian diet in Tibet. The Karmapa, for instance, told me that while he generally encouraged vegetarianism, he made an exception for nomads, whose lifestyle, he believes, is fundamentally incompatible with vegetarianism.[30] Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö has also conceded that nomads do not need to be vegetarian, explaining to me that after much thought, he had concluded that "nomadism is something worth trying to preserve. There is a simplicity and honesty to nomads' lifestyle. So I don't ask them to give up meat."[31] Instead of arguing that all Tibetans must adopt full vegetarianism, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö has advocated graded levels of reducing animal harm, suggesting that individuals must decide what level of commitment is appropriate for their lifestyles. In his *Words to Increase Virtue*, he presents vegetarianism as the ideal, claiming "it is very important for both ordained and lay people to guide their next birth by taking a vow to never eat meat again, if at all possible."[32] At the same time, however, recognizing the difficulty of vegetarianism—particularly for nomads—he also suggests other practices that can help reduce animal suffering if full vegetarianism is not possible: "It is great if families abandon their personal slaughtering, either permanently or temporarily. If even this is not possible, you must definitely reduce the killing a little. Further, if it is not possible to avoid slaughtering, you absolutely must not use such horrible methods as binding the nose or beheading."[33] Once again, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö's recognition of the difficulty of vegetarianism and his willingness to accommodate partial levels of vegetarianism echo the tensions seen in texts written by earlier generations of religious leaders, where vegetarianism was held up as a difficult ideal.

Causes and Conditions

This striking similarity between pre-communist and contemporary arguments for vegetarianism points to an important point about the contemporary movement: it draws primarily on arguments rooted in long-standing Tibetan ideals, rather than concepts imported from another country or culture. Some observers, critical of what they see as a new aspect of Tibetan culture, have tried to account for the emergence of the vegetarian movement by suggesting that it is an import from Chinese Buddhism, animal rights activists from the West (meaning Europe and the United States), or India. The Tibetan blogger Jamyang Kyi, for instance, asserts that vegetarianism in contemporary Tibet is a "fad inspired by Chinese Buddhists and Western vegetarians."[34] And there is some tangential evidence to suggest that Tibetans are at least aware of support for vegetarianism stemming from these countries. A video disk I was given in Kham, for instance, contained a video produced by PETA,[35] narrated by Sir Paul McCartney with Chinese subtitles. Similarly, many of those I spoke with were aware that Chinese Buddhists are often vegetarian and praised that aspect of Chinese Buddhist culture. Fewer were aware of India's long-standing vegetarian traditions, but those who were also praised that aspect of Hindu religiosity. Clearly, there is awareness that vegetarianism is a global issue.

And yet, over the course of more than a hundred interviews, no Tibetans suggested that any of these factors contributed significantly to their decision to become vegetarian. When asked why they gave up meat, some noted their own reflections on the ethics of meat eating, or a friend who had influenced them. Most, however, cited the influence of contemporary Tibetan religious leaders such as Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, Rasé Könchok Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, or the Karmapa. Further, a close reading of the various texts and videos produced by these and other lamas indicated that they are drawing on Tibetan, rather than external, influences. As I have already noted, the arguments these individuals make closely reflect the arguments for vegetarianism found in pre-communist material. Foreign voices do occasionally appear in these works, but they are always tangential to the main arguments. I do not want to suggest that external ideas about meat and vegetarianism have not influenced the contemporary movement at all. In this era of globalization and the Internet, that would be naïve. What I do want to argue is that, on the whole, these non-Tibetan voices have played only a minimal role in shaping the movement, either directly or indirectly. The Tibetans I spoke with were pleased that prominent foreigners such as Sir Paul McCartney shared their convictions about meat. But when it came to justifying a vegetarian diet to themselves or others, the arguments they used drew almost exclusively on Tibet's own vegetarian traditions.

Rather than looking to external influences to account for the rapid rise of the vegetarian movement, I suggest that we should look instead at recent shifts in the tensions that have long surrounded vegetarianism in Tibet. As I have discussed throughout this book, the moral faults of meat have long been acknowledged in religious circles. In Buddhist perspective, vegetarianism was seen as a virtuous practice aligned with compassion, renunciation, and other ideals. This stance was moderated, however, by a pair of alternative perspectives. The first acknowledged the religious perspective, but also viewed meat as necessary for human health. The second rejected the religious argument entirely and saw meat as a good thing, a positive part of life connected with the pursuit of wealth and the heroic masculine ideal. Individuals had to weigh and balance these perspectives when deciding how much meat to eat.

For most of the last millennium, these alternate perspectives on meat have effectively balanced religious concerns, limiting the widespread adoption of vegetarianism. The rapid changes in Tibetan society over the last two decades, however, have altered this balance. New roads and the trucks that drive on them have significantly changed the types of food that are available in Tibet. Regions that used to be months of caravan travel from an urban center can now be reached in one or two days. This has facilitated the widespread distribution of new foods. Bananas, oranges, and green vegetables are now widely available, even in remote areas, as are commercially produced foods (including the vegetarian snacks illustrated in figure 8.2). These new foods have greatly expanded the options available to those considering giving up meat.

At the same time, the introduction of Western medicine has significantly altered perceptions of how necessary meat really is. As discussed in chapter 5, few, if any, pre-communist Tibetans believed that vegetarianism was a healthy diet. Even those lamas who argued most vociferously for vegetarianism also admitted that it was not healthy and often suggested that the infirm and elderly should be allowed to eat at least some meat. Many contemporary Tibetans, on the other hand, believe that one can, in fact, be perfectly healthy as a vegetarian. This claim is explicit in much of the anti-meat literature that has been produced recently, such as in a poster published by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, which states that, among other virtues, "vegetarianism leads to a healthy body" (figure 8.3).[36]

Similarly, Rasé Könchok Gyatso devotes four pages to meat's negative health consequences in his *Benefits of Being Vegetarian*, where he concludes, "In short, many diseases will appear because you eat meat, and the mind will be unruly and mean."[37] Arguably more important than these textual claims, the idea that vegetarianism can be healthy has been internalized by many of those I spoke with. Many, in fact, told me that they felt healthier without meat. Remarkably, even some meat eaters were willing to admit that vegetarianism was healthy. One middle-aged woman, for instance, remarked, "I know I would be healthier if I could give up meat, but I just can't do it!"

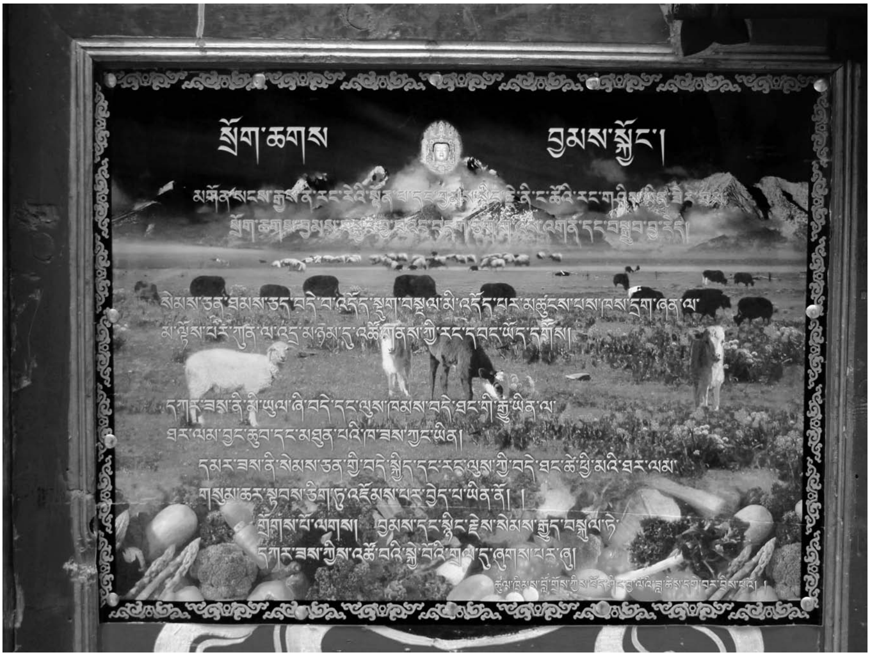

FIGURE 8.3 Poster produced by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö that promotes health as a positive result of vegetarianism.

In making these claims, many Tibetans, particularly those who were younger or who had lived in urban environments, noted that they could get protein from other sources as well, and that vegetables and fruit were rich in vitamins and other nutrients. Some even went so far as to claim that meat was actually unhealthy, usually pointing to what they perceived as high rates of obesity and diabetes among Tibetans as proof. The fact that these individuals invoked Western medical ideas such as protein and vitamins or diseases such as diabetes does not mean that traditional medical attitudes have been entirely eclipsed. In an echo of pre-communist concerns, several Tibetans did tell me that meat was necessary to maintain the proper balance among the body's three humors,[38] suggesting that in their eyes meat continued to be a necessary part of a healthy diet.[39] Nevertheless, it is clear that many of those I spoke with thought that vegetarians could be perfectly healthy, a view that is virtually unattested in pre-communist literature.

Between the new foods available in Tibet and this shifting view of meat's medicinal properties, the barriers to adopting vegetarianism have been significantly lowered. In the pre-modern period, vegetarianism was seen as a significant hardship, with real health consequences. Now, while it is not necessarily considered easy, it is seen as a reasonable option for many people. The arguments supporting vegetarianism remain largely the same as they were in the pre-communist period, but the perceived barriers to the diet have been lowered. These changes have gone a long way toward removing the "necessary" from the "necessary evil" perspective. As the idea that meat is necessary recedes, increasing numbers of Tibetans, drawing on well-established religious ideals, are adopting a vegetarian diet of one form or another. It is this shift, I believe, that accounts for vegetarianism's rapid increase in popularity.

At the same time, as some of the perceived barriers to vegetarianism are removed, however, the alternate perspectives discussed in chapter 6 of this book continue to militate against vegetarianism. Many contemporary Tibetans, for instance, continue to embrace the pursuit of wealth, embracing the PRC's post-Mao economic reforms. As in previous generations, meat is a marker of success in this pursuit of wealth. One successful businessman, for instance, told me that while he was sympathetic to the religious argument against meat, he had to serve it at banquets or his business partners would look down on him. Another individual emphasized the need not only to serve meat, but also to serve expensive and exotic varieties. For these people, meat was a form of conspicuous consumption, an expression of their success in business. This attitude was not universal, and one couple told me that they made a point of serving only vegetarian food at their wedding banquet, explicitly seeking to show their guests that one could have a good party without meat. Another individual, a wealthy businessman and also a long-term vegetarian, had opened a meat-free restaurant in order to have a venue for the types of banquets that are an important part of maintaining business relationships in contemporary China.[40] Despite these outliers, however, the majority of those I interviewed who were involved in business felt that meat remained a necessary part of their business dealings.

Perhaps more importantly, meat continues to have strong connections with the heroic masculine ideal. This ideal—which celebrates qualities such as strength, skill at arms, horsemanship, and the ability to win a fight—

continues to be a strong cultural presence, particularly in Kham. Horse races are a regular part of the civic calendar, and many families continue to own (if not necessarily openly display) firearms. Meat, particularly through its ongoing association with strength, continues to be a part of this vision. Several young men told me that without meat they would be unable to fulfill their masculine roles. "If I didn't eat meat," one stated simply, "I would become weak and couldn't act like a man." For these individuals, meat remained an important part of their diet, deeply intertwined with their identities as young Tibetan men.

Overall, then, the three-way tension that I have described throughout this book has now become more of a two-way tension. The religious ideal of vegetarianism remains potent, as does meat's positive associations within the alternate ideals of economic gain and heroic masculinity. Changing attitudes toward health, however, have caused the idea that meat is a necessary evil to decline significantly. As a result, those Tibetans who are inclined toward Buddhism are more likely to adopt vegetarianism than they may have been in the past, while those who are inclined toward the alternative ideals of economic success or heroic masculinity remain unlikely to do so.

Vegetarianism and Tibetan Identity

This division also reflects a broader tension over how Tibetan culture should be defined. On the one hand a strong contingent of contemporary Tibetans argue that Buddhism is the central, defining characteristic of Tibetan culture. It should, therefore, be preserved and cultivated on both an individual and communal basis. Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok provides a good example of this perspective. As discussed above, Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok argues powerfully that not only does Buddhism remain relevant in contemporary society, but it also has an important role to play in shaping the future of Tibetan culture. As Holly Gayley points out, this view rests on a distinct skepticism toward the type of secular modernity promoted by the Chinese state. Such modernity, with its emphasis on capitalism and the pursuit of wealth, tends toward excess and the loss of ethical values. Buddhism, in Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok's perspective, offers a counterpoint to this capitalistic excess, providing the grounding needed to allow modernity to develop in an ethically sound way.[41]

For Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok and many like-minded Tibetans, Buddhism is the core of Tibetan culture, the necessary point that makes Tibetan life unique and valuable.

On the other hand, many other contemporary Tibetans view Tibetan cultural identity through distinctly nonreligious lenses. In *On the Margins of Tibet: Cultural Survival on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier*, Åshild Kolås and Monika Thowsen point to an emergent vision among many Tibetans that sees "authentic Tibetan culture as the culture of the grasslands."[42] In Kolås and Thowsen's interpretation, this vision prioritizes a romantic vision of nomadic life:

> Life on the grasslands is being eulogized in songs and paintings, poems and karaoke videos, glossy magazines and promotional tourist materials. This image of the grasslands is one of nomads and their herds roaming a beautiful landscape of snow-capped peaks and green pastures, blue skies, and crystal clear waters.[43]

This vision appeals to tourists, but it also appeals to many contemporary Tibetans, eager to assert the strength and validity of their traditional culture.[44] Importantly, while Buddhist elements are often present in these depictions, they are not the focus. The overall pattern that Kolås and Thowson observe, then, features two distinct visions of Tibetan cultural identity. In the first, Buddhism defines Tibetan culture, and Tibetans are asked to actively practice and preserve their religion. In the other, nomadic grasslands culture forms the core of Tibetan cultural identity.

At times, the tension between these competing visions has emerged into public—and sometimes rancorous—debate. Lauren Hartley discusses one such episode in Amdo in 1999 following the publication of an article suggesting that aspects of Buddhist thought were holding Tibetans back, and that they should be either jettisoned entirely or relegated to a purely religious sphere. Not surprisingly, this article was not well received by members of the religious establishment, many of whom pushed back. The original article and its response, Hartley observes, "serve as evidence of a heated debate among at least a certain sector of the Tibetan population over the utility of traditional learning, customs, and values."[45] Hartley discusses events in 1999, and Kolås and Thowsen's assessment is based on fieldwork conducted in the first years of the new millennium. However, the debate they depict, between a vision of Tibetan cultural identity that prioritizes Buddhism and one that prioritizes the grasslands, continued during the period of my own fieldwork from 2007 through 2012.

The contemporary debate over vegetarianism maps neatly onto this broader discussion. I have argued that the question of meat eating in contemporary Tibet is best understood as a tension between the religious ideal of vegetarianism and nonreligious ideals of economic gain and heroic masculinity. Prior to the communist period, this tension was moderated by a third position that argued, largely on medical grounds, that meat was a necessary evil. This idea has faded in recent years, however, giving vegetarianism room to expand in popularity, while also highlighting the remaining division between the Buddhist and secular camps. This division aligns easily with the broader tension between those who see Buddhism as the defining characteristic of Tibetan culture and those who see Tibetan culture through a lens that prioritizes grasslands culture and economic progress.

Further, many of those I spoke with explicitly mapped the debates over meat onto these broader discussions of the nature of Tibetan culture. One young monk at Yachen Gar Monastery, for instance, told me, “Fundamentally, Tibet is a Buddhist country, and we should all try to be good Buddhists. That means that now, when so many other foods are available, we should stop eating meat.” Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö made a similar point during a talk on vegetarianism given at the Trace Foundation in New York: “Respecting the law of cause and effect and showing compassion,” he asserted, “is the most important value of Tibetan culture. Of course, it is very difficult to apply these two values in practice in a perfect way. However, given that this is a very important part of our culture, then this is something that we all need to strive to implement in our own lives.” For Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, compassion and respect for karma are the core of Tibetan cultural identity, and he explicitly links these two values to the need to adopt vegetarianism to whatever extent an individual can. Vegetarianism, in this view—shared not only by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö himself, but also by many others—is an expression of the deepest values of Tibetan culture.

On the other hand, many contemporary Tibetans have taken precisely the opposite stance, accusing the vegetarian movement of subverting Tibetan culture. In an extended interview on this topic, one prominent Tibetan intellectual told me that “nomads preserve the most traditional Tibetan culture, but this [i.e., the vegetarian movement] is causing them to abandon their livelihoods.” This man did not dispute that vegetarianism was in accordance with Buddhist values. The problem, he felt, was the unintended side effect that a reduced demand for meat would negatively impact nomads' income and, as a result, their ability to continue with their lifestyle. "The conduct is good," he told me, referring to vegetarianism, "but the results are bad." He closed the interview with a specific critique of Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, saying that while he was learned in books, he lacked experience. While no one else I spoke with was as articulate on this point, several others expressed broadly similar sentiments, telling me that vegetarianism was adding another difficulty to nomads trying to preserve their culture. For them, nomadic grasslands culture was the most important element of Tibetan culture and needed to be preserved, even if that meant downplaying or deemphasizing Buddhist ethics.

I am not the only scholar to note that the contemporary vegetarian movement maps neatly onto larger debates about Tibetan culture. In his perceptive 2012 dissertation, *Alternative Development on the Tibetan Plateau: The Case of the Anti-Slaughter Movement*, Gaerrang has analyzed the contemporary anti-slaughter movement, in which individuals and communities—inspired by religious leaders and ideals—vow to avoid slaughtering their animals.[46] Gaerrang notes that the anti-slaughter movement is directly opposed to the neoliberal development model promoted by the state, which promotes industrialized animal husbandry as an economic engine for nomadic communities. Through this opposition, he argues, the anti-slaughter movement "works as a tool for Tibetan people to domesticate neoliberal development . . . making it less culturally destructive, and to make it consistent with Buddhist norms and moral standards."[47] The anti-slaughter movement, in this view, is a part of Buddhist-aligned resistance to state policy. The anti-slaughter movement is distinct from the vegetarian movement: many of those who promise to stop slaughtering continue to eat meat that they acquire from other sources. Nevertheless, both movements draw on concerns over animal welfare and are driven by many of the same religious leaders. While Gaerrang's conclusions are focused on the anti-slaughter movement, they also reflect many of the dynamics at play in the vegetarian movement.

More specifically focused on vegetarianism, Katia Buffetrille's article, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism," analyzes the previously mentioned post by the Tibetan blogger Jamyang Kyi and the backlash against it. Jamyang Kyi, Buffetrille notes, argues passionately that although vegetarianism may be appropriate in China or other places, it is incompatible with Tibetan life, where hard work at high altitude requires the nutrients supplied by meat. In their responses to her original post, however, many Tibetans were critical of Jamyang Kyi, often using derisive language. These two camps, Buffetrille suggests, reflect competing visions for the future of Tibetan culture. In one, "certain lamas, supported by the Dalai Lama and some self-immolators, request them to become pure and perfect Buddhist practitioners, totally non-violent and vegetarian."[48] In Buffetrille's analysis, this vision of pure Buddhist ethics is opposed by a discourse, supported by the Chinese state and influential lay Tibetans like Jamyang Kyi, that "emphasizes economic development and assimilation."[49] In the end, Buffetrille notes, Tibetans themselves are choosing between these visions of Tibetan culture, with the popularity of vegetarianism suggesting that many tend toward the religious vision.

Both Gaerrang and Buffetrille note that the Beijing government expressly supports perspectives that prioritize economic growth. Over the last decade, Beijing has implemented a campaign to settle nomadic communities in fixed housing.[50] This campaign, implemented across ethnically Tibetan regions, has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of Tibetans who maintain relatively traditional nomadic lifestyles, moving seasonally with their herds. To its critics, then, the vegetarian movement represents simply one more nail in the coffin of nomadic culture. For those who view nomadic life as the core of Tibetan identity, vegetarianism is not simply a question of personal morality but an attack on what it means to be Tibetan.

In response, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö and other religious leaders who support vegetarianism often make explicit allowances for nomads. In a recent conversation, Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö told me that he found the nomadic issue deeply perplexing and had considered it at length. In the end, he had come to the opinion that it is permissible for them to eat meat and continue slaughtering as long as it is for personal consumption and not excessive economic gain. Such nuance, however, tends to get lost in the public debates, and more than one person told me, sometimes quite angrily, that Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö and others were demanding that all Tibetans—including all nomads—become complete vegetarians, and that they had no concern at all for maintaining traditional Tibetan culture. In the view of these individuals, the vegetarian movement plays directly into the hands of the Chinese government's campaign to eradicate nomadic culture.

For both sides of the debate, therefore, vegetarianism has become a politically loaded topic, intimately connected with notions of Tibetan identity and resistance to the Chinese state. Those who locate Tibetan identity primarily in nomadic and other lay culture may see vegetarianism as an attempt to subvert Tibetan identity, appearing just at the time when that identity is vulnerable to state policy and other outside economic forces. In this perspective, those who promote vegetarianism are, at best, unwitting accomplices of the state, and, at worst, active collaborators. Those who see Buddhism as the defining characteristic of Tibetan culture, on the other hand, see themselves as defending Tibetan identity in the face of an onslaught of modern economic policy. The state, they note, has actively promoted industrial slaughter as an economic engine in many pastoral regions. Becoming vegetarian (or at least refusing to slaughter), these figures suggest, is a way of promoting Buddhist values over economic gain, thereby remaining true to what they see as the core of Tibetan culture.

This coupling of vegetarianism with broader questions of cultural identity and political resistance, I believe, helps to account for the remarkably passionate rhetoric that has emerged on this issue. Tibetans exist as a minority population in China, with long-standing political grievances against the central state. In this context, defining cultural norms—including the question of vegetarianism—becomes vitally important, sparking heated exchanges. At this point, it is worth recalling the young man who accused pro-vegetarian lamas of literally destroying Tibetan culture. Others used different words, but expressed a similar anger toward those who advocate vegetarianism. For their part, while most religious leaders take a measured tone, others involved in this debate are not always so polite. Buffetrille notes that some online responses to Jamyang Kyi's post used particularly harsh language: "These violent comments call Jamyang Kyi 'Demoness' ('dre mo), and advise her to eat her husband's or children's flesh, or even her own flesh, since she likes meat."[51] In this politically charged environment, vegetarianism is another site where broader debates over the nature of Tibetan cultural identity are played out. Individual decisions are not simply issues of personal choice, whether one individual or community chooses to align primarily with a religious perspective or with economic or heroic masculine ideals. Instead, the political overtones that now surround meat eating mean that individual dietary decisions are also expressions of support for one vision of Tibetan cultural identity or another. This is an ongoing process, of course, and the strong rhetoric used by both sides suggests just how much is at stake.

EPILOGUE

Conclusion

Throughout this book, I have suggested that the practice of vegetarianism lies at the intersection of multiple cultural models and ideals. In the precommunist period, it was widely regarded as a virtuous practice. This religious perspective, however, was offset by health considerations and competing cultural ideals, particularly the economic and heroic masculine perspectives. As a result of this tension, while vegetarianism waxed and waned in popularity to some degree, it remained a diet that was admired but only rarely implemented. By contrast, the last decade has seen vegetarianism achieve unprecedented levels of popularity across the plateau in remarkably little time. This growth, I believe, can largely be accounted for by noting the shifting attitudes regarding the role of meat in human health. As new foods become available and more people begin to see vegetarianism as a healthy option, cultural space has opened in which the diet is able to flourish.

Its very popularity, however, has implicated vegetarianism in broader debates over the future of Tibetan cultural identity itself, as competing camps prioritize either Buddhism or lay Tibetan culture. I have argued throughout this book that vegetarianism has long been a barometer for other lifestyle choices. Adopting it reinforced claims to religious legitimacy, while eating a lot of meat suggested that an individual gave primary allegiance to other ideals. In the present context of broad debates over the identity of Tibetan culture, however, these decisions have become magnified. What was once a question of personal or communal priorities now serves as a marker for the values and future direction of Tibetan culture as it is broadly understood.

This chapter has provided only a brief glimpse of the contemporary vegetarian movement. There are far more individual voices at play than I have been able to cover in this brief account, and by no means do I want to suggest that this is the full story. Other scholars, more well-versed in contemporary Tibetan culture and politics than I, are also seeking to understand this remarkable movement, and I look forward to seeing the results of their research, which will no doubt expand on and surpass what I have presented here. I do want to suggest, however, that the contemporary vegetarian movement should not be understood as a cultural import, whether from China, India, or the West. Instead, I believe that what we are seeing now is the flourishing of ethical norms and ideals that have long been present on the plateau but which have, for just as long, been overshadowed by other, competing concerns. By understanding the history of vegetarianism, including the various tensions and perspectives that surrounded it, scholars can also begin to understand the changes in contemporary Tibetan society that have allowed this diet to flourish as never before.

Tibetan Names and Terms

The following table correlates the phonetic transliteration for Tibetan names and terms used throughout this book with their correct spelling in Wylie transliteration. Wherever possible, I have also included the corresponding reference number for the Buddhist Digital Resource Center database (formerly the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center).

Phonetics	Wylie	BDRC
Amdo	a mdo	G649
A-tag Lhamo	a stag lha mo	
Atiśa Dīpaṃkara-śrījñiāna	a ti sha dI paM ka ra shrI dznyA na	P3379
Ba	dba' / sba	
béken	bad kan	
Changkya Rolpé Dorjé	lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje	P182
Changlung Paṇḍita	lcang lung paṇḍita	P290
Changtang	byang thang	G3189
Chatrel Sangyé Dorjé	bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje	P6036
chayik	bca' yig	
Chöying Tobden Dorjé	chos dbyings stobs ldan rdo rje	P1709
Dartang Monastery	dar thang dgon	G523
Dawa Drolma	zla ba sgrol ma	
Degé	sde dge	G1366

(*continued*)

Phonetics	Wylie	BDRC
Desi Sangyé Gyatso	sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho	P421
Devadatta	lhas phyin / lhas sphyin / lha sphyin / lhas sbyin	
Dilgo Khyentsé	dil mgo mkhyen brtse	P625
dobdob	dob dob	
Dodrubchen Jigme Tenpé Nyima	rdo grub chen ‘jigs med bstan pa’i nyi ma	P248
Dodrubchen Jigmé Trinlé Özer	rdo grub chen ‘jigs med phrin las ‘od zer	P293
dokar	rdor dkar / sdor dkar	
Do Khyentsé	mdo mkhyen brtse	P698
Dolpopa	dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan	P139
domsum	sdom gsum	
Donyö Drubpa	don yod grub pa	P2626
Drakar Gompa	brag dkar	
Drakpa Gyeltsen	grags pa rgyal mtshan	P1614
Drepung Monastery	‘bras spungs dgon	G108
Drigung Til Monastery	‘bri gung mthil dgon pa	G340
Drokmi Lotsawa	‘brog me lo tsA ba	P3285
Dromtön Gyelwé Jungné	‘brom ston rgyal ba’i ‘byung gnas	P2557
Düdjom Lingpa	bdud ‘joms gling pa	P705
Düdjom Rinpoché Jigdrel Yeshé Dorjé	bdud ‘joms rin po che ‘jigs bral ye shes rdo rje	P736
dülwa	‘dul ba	
Dzogchen Monastery	rdzogs chen dgon	G16
Gerab Shepochen	dge rab shed po can	
Gesar of Ling	gling ge sar	
Golok	mgo log	G1490
Gö Lotsawa	‘gos lo tsa ba	P318
Gönlung Monastery	dgon lung byams pa gling	G165
Gönpo Namgyel	mgon po rnam rgyal	P6521
Gorampa Sönam Sengé	go rams pa bsod nams seng ge	P1042
Gyurmé Tübten Jamyang Drakpa	gyur med thub bstan ‘jam dbyangs grags pa	P726
Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé	‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas	P264
Jamgön Mipham	‘jam mgon mi pham	P252
Jampel Gyepé Dorjé	‘jam dpal dgyes pa’i rdo rje	P8297
Jampel Pawo Dorjé Tsal	‘jam dpal dpa’ bo rdo rje rtsal	

Phonetics	Wylie	BDRC
Jamyang Khyentsé Wangchuk	‘jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse’i dbang phyug	P1089
Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo	‘jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse’i dbang po	P258
Jamyang Kyi	‘jam dbyangs skyid	
Jamyang Shepa	‘jam dbyangs bshad pa	
Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu	‘jigs med rgyal ba’i myu gu	P695
Jigmé Lingpa	‘jigs med gling pa	P314
Jigmé Sengé	‘jigs med seng ge	
Jigmé Yeshé Drakpa	‘jigs med ye shes grags pa	P344
Jikten Sumgön	‘jig rten gsum mgon	P16
Jyekundo	skye rgu mdo	G869
Kagyur	bka’ ‘gyur	
Kangyur Rinpoché	bka’ ‘gyur rin po che	P734
Karma Chakmé	karma chags med	P649
Karma Pakshi	karma pakShi	P1487
Karmé Khenpo Rinchen Dargyé	karma’i mkhan po rin chen dar rgyas	P2710
karsé	dkar zas	
karsépa	dkar zas pa	
Kham	khams	G1326
Khedrup Jé Gelek Pelzang	mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang	P55
Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok	mkhan po ‘jigs med phun tshogs	P7774
Khenpo Karthar	mkhan po kar mthar	
Khenpo Ngakchung	mkhan po ngag dbang dpal bzang	P724
Khenpo Shenga	mkhan po gzhan dga’	P699
Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö	mkhan po tshul khrims blo gros	P7911
Khentrul Rinpoché	mkhan sprul rin po che	
Kudön Sönam Lodrö	sku mdun bsod nams blo gros	P1682
Kumbum Monastery	sku ‘bum dgon	G160
Künga Tenpé Gyeltsen	kun dga’ bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan	P967
Künzang Sherab	kun bzang shes rab	P655
Labrang Monastery	bla brang bkra shis ‘khyil dgon pa	G162
lama	bla ma	
Lama Kunzang Dorjee	bla ma kun bzang rdo rje	
lama myönpa	bla ma smyon pa	
Lama Sangyé	bla ma sangs rgyas	

(*continued*)

Phonetics	Wylie	BDRC
Larung Gar	bla rung sgar	G3997
Lhasa	lha sa	G2126
Litang	li thang	G2304
Lochen Dharmasri	lo chen dharma srI	
Longchen Tar	klong chen thar	
Lopön Tenzin Namdak	slob dpon bstan ‘dzin rnam dag	P1655
Lowo Khenchen	glo bo mkhan chen	P782
lung	rlung	
Manigego	mani gad mgo	
mantrin	sngags pa	
marsé	dmar zas	
mendrüp	sman grub	
Menri Monastery	sman ri dgon	G4
Metön Sherab Özer	me ston nyi ma rgyal mtshan	P1658
michö	mi chos	
Mikyö Dorjé	mi bskyod rdo rje	P385
Milarepa	mi la ras pa	P1853
Mindroling Monastery	smin grol gling	G14
Muchen Konchok Gyeltsen	mus chen dkon mchog rgyal mtshan	P1034
Naktsang Nulo	nags tshang nus blo	P1GS60382
Namchiwé Senggo Lhalung Zik	snam phyi ba’i seng ‘go lha lung gzigs	
namsum dakpé sha	rnam gsum dag pa’i sha / snang gsum dag pa’i sha / brags pa rnam gsum	
Nangchen	nang chen	G4144
Naropa	na ro pa	P3085
Nesar Tashi Chöphel	gnas gsar bkra shis chos ‘phel	P6173
Ngaba	rnga ba	G2331
Ngawang Chödrak	ngag dbang chos grags	P787
Ngawang Lekpa	ngag dbang leg pa	P812
Ngawang Lozang Gyatso	ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho	P37
Ngorchen Künga Zangpo	ngor chen kun dga’ bzang po	P1132
Ngor Ewam Chöden	ngor e wam chos ldan	G211
nor	nor	
Nyakla Pema Düdül	nyag bla pad ma bdud ‘dul	P2424
Nyakrong	nyag rong	G1365
Nyammé Sherab Gyeltsen	mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan	P1675

Phonetics	Wylie	BDRC
Nyingma	rnying ma	
nyüngné	smyung gnas	
Ogyen Trinley Dorje	o rgyan ‘phrin las rdo rje	P5611
Orgyen Chökyi	o rgyan chos skyid	
Orgyen Lingpa	o rgyan gling pa	P4943
Padma Lhündrub Gyatso	padma lhun grub rgya mtsho	P5174
Pakmodrupa	phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po	P127
Patrül Rinpoché	dpal sprul rin po che	P270
Pel-Narthang Monastery	dpal snar thang dgon	
Pelyül Monastery	dpal yul dgon	G18
Pema Nyingjé Wangpo	padma nyin byed dbang po	P559
Rasé Könchok Gyatso	ra sed dkon mchog rgya mtsho	
Reting Monastery	rwa sgreng dgon	G74
Rigdzin Garwang	rig ‘dzin gar gyi dbang phyug	P6243
Rinchen Gön	rin chen mgon	P1784
Rolpé Dorjé	rol pa’i rdo rje	
Saga Dawa	sa ga zla ba	
Sakya Paṇḍita	sa skya pandita	P1056
Samten Gyatso	bsam gtan rgya mtsho	P9904
Sangngak Rinpoché	gsang sngags rin po che	
Sangyé Gyeltsen	sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan	P776
Sangyé Püntsok	sangs rgyas phun tshogs	P796
Sarma	gsar ma	
semchen	sems can	
Sera Khandro	se ra mkha’ ‘gro	P742
Sera Monastery	se ra dgon	G154
Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdröl	zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol	P287
sha masa ken	sha ma za mkhan	
Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen	shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan	P1663
shasa khandro	sha za mkha’ ‘gro	
Sherab Jungné	dbon shes rab ‘byung gnas	P131
sosor tarpé dompa	so sor thar pa’i sdom pa	
Taklung Tangpa	stag lung thang pa	P2649
Tapey	bkra bhe	
Tashi Khedrup	bkra shis mkhas grub	
Tashi Sengé	bskra shis seng ge	
Tengchen Monastery	steng chen dgon	G1666

(*continued*)

Phonetics	Wylie	BDRC
Tenzin Gyatso	bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho	
Terdak Lingpa	gter bdag gling pa	P7
Tilopa	tai lo pa	P4024
Tri Düsong	khri ‘dus srong	
Trinlé Tayé Dorjé	phrin las mtha’ yas rdo rje	P10569
tripa	mkhris pa	
Tri Songdetsen	khri srong lde’u btsan	P7787
tsampa	rtsam pa	
Tsering Lama Jampel Zangpo	tshe ring bla ma ‘jam dpal bzang po	P6239
tsetar	tshe thar	
tsok	tshogs	
Tsongkhapa	tsong kha pa	P64
Tsurpu Monastery	mtshur phu dgon	G33
Tuken Chökyi Nyima	thu’u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma	P170
Tülku Urgyen	sprul sku o rgyan	P867
Yachen Gar	ya chen dgon	G3812
Yönten Gyatso	yon tan rgya mtsho	P6961
Yutok Yönten Gönpo	g.yu thog yon tan mgon po	P4333
Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel	zhabs drung ngag dbang rnam rgyal	P509
Ziling	zi ling	G598

Notes

Introduction

1. tshul khrims blo gros, *dge bskul zhu yig*, 191–197 (Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, "Words to Increase Virtue").
2. A generic term for Tibetan religious teachers.
3. All of these positions have been upheld by contemporary Tibetan vegetarians, though not nearly as often as religious arguments. See this book's epilogue for more details.
4. Zhang Yisun, ed., *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, 1:1448.
5. Zhang Yisun, ed., *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, 1:1482.
6. Hou Haoran, "Some Remarks on the Transmission of the Ascetic Discipline of the 'Single Mat,' " 206.
7. On the *dokar* diet among the early Drigung Kagyü, see Hou Haoran, "Some Remarks on the Transmission of the Ascetic Discipline of the 'Single Mat.' " On the *dokar* diet among the Ngor Sakya, see Heimbel, "Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)," 138–139.
8. kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *rje bla ma rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, 9.

   > *gong smos dge slong gi sdom pa zhus nas bzung / sha chang gi bza' btung / phyi dro'i kha zas rnams spangs*

9. rdo rje mdzes 'od, *bka' brgyud kyi rnam thar chen mo rin po che'i gter mdzod dgos 'dod 'byung gnas* (Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen, trans. *The Great Kagyu Masters*). On the dating of this text, see Peter Alan Roberts, *The Biographies of Rechungpa*, 9–11.
10. Ogyen Trinley Dorje is one of two claimants to the title of Karmapa, along with Trinlé Tayé Dorjé (1983–). This is not the place for a long discussion of this

controversy, but within contemporary Tibet itself, Ogyen Trinley Dorje is almost universally accepted as the rightful Karmapa.

11. tshul khrims blo gros, *dge bskul zhu yig*, 196 (Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, "Words to Increase Virtue").
12. See, for instance, padma nyin byed dbang po, *zin bris kyi rim pa sna tshogs pa'i skor rnams phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa yon tan bdud rtsi'i gter mdzod*, 3:235 (Dilgo Khyentse, *Brilliant Moon*, 80).
13. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *bya btang tshogs drug rang grol gyis phyogs med ri khrod 'grims pa'i tshe rang gzhan chos la bskul phyir glu dbyangs dga' ston 'gyed pa*, 4:37b.

    gal te gcod par mi nus kyang / / mthong thos dogs gsum med pa yi / / rnam gsum dag pa'i sha zos na /

14. Accidents can be more or less accidental. As Geoff Childs has shown, when villagers in some areas speak of a yak that "fell off a cliff," they are merely using a euphemism for conventional slaughter (Childs, *Tibetan Diary*, 127). In my own fieldwork, however, I have frequently found villages where, despite my best efforts, I could find no evidence of slaughtered meat, and where residents vehemently denied that their animals succumbed to intentional accidents.
15. A clear example of this can be found in the life and teachings of the Bön polymath Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen (1859–1935).
16. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri bong shin tu brtan pa'i gtam brag ri'i mgu la rgyan*, 4:772.

    yud la smyon par 'gyur ba yi / chang ni rtag tu spang bar bya /

17. 'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 327–328 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 5: Buddhist Ethics*, 101).
18. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sgog tsong gi nye dmigs*, 15:154–156.
19. Berounský, "Demonic Tobacco in Tibet," 25.
20. dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, *sha chang bkag pa'i lung 'dren rnams*, 6:651–667 (Kaie Mochizuki, "On the Scriptures Introducing the Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol by Dol Po Pa").
21. Perlo, *Kinship and Killing*, 1.
22. For a critical review, see Moorhead, "Review of *Kinship and Killing*," 458–459.
23. Gross, *The Question of the Animal and Religion*, 151.
24. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*.
25. Among many other similar studies, see Ruby and Heine, "Meat, Morals, and Masculinity," 447–450; Sobal, "Men, Meat, and Marriage," 135–158.
26. Roy, "Meat-Eating, Masculinity, and Renunciation in India," 62–91; Shahar, *The Shaolin Monastery*, 42–52.
27. Stewart, *Vegetarianism and Animal Ethics in Contemporary Buddhism*.
28. kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *rje bla ma rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, 10.
29. For more on the relationship between literacy and power in Tibet, see Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*.

30. For a classic discussion of the way authors use their texts to market themselves, see Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*, 116–121.
31. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus.*
32. In 2008 the Tibetan region experienced a series of riots in opposition to Chinese control. By the time I arrived, the large demonstrations had been replaced by a wave of self-immolations. The police presence was widespread, and all foreigners, including myself, were regarded with deep suspicion by officials.
33. This list is drawn from the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Other texts sometimes have slight variations, but the general theme remains the same.

1. A Brief History of Vegetarianism in Tibet

1. For a published example of this skepticism, see Geoffrey Samuel's statement that "the emphasis among a number of present-day lamas on vegetarianism and animal rights is a recent development in the Tibetan context" (Samuel, "Revisiting the Problem of Bon Identity," 91).

   Western scholars were not always skeptical about the existence of vegetarianism in Tibet. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, some armchair scholars, drawing on Samuel Turner's account of his visit to Tashilhunpo in 1783–1784, assumed that all Tibetan monks were vegetarian. Frederic Shoberl, for instance, wrote in 1824, "Hence we may infer that all sorts of animal food are forbidden to the religious, who abstain also from every kind of strong liquors" (Shoberl, *Tibet, and India Beyond the Ganges*, 26).
2. Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*; Patrül Rinpoché, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*.
3. Doniger, *The Hindus*, 149.
4. For more on this discussion, see R. B. Mather, "The Bonze's Begging Bowl," 417–424; Rahula, "Buddhist Attitude Toward Meat-Eating and Non-Violence," 101–112; Ruegg, "Ahiṃsā and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism"; Waley, "Did the Buddha Die of Eating Pork?" 343–354; Wasson and Doniger O'Flaherty, "The Last Meal of the Buddha," 591–603. For one voice in strident opposition, see Norm Phelps, *The Great Compassion*.
5. Stevens, "What Kind of Food Did Sakyamuni Buddha Eat?" 443.
6. *'dul ba gzhi*, 3:25a–25b. A similar account also appears in other editions of the Buddhist canon. For a translation of the corresponding passage from the Pali canon, which features several important differences, see I. B. Horner, trans., *The Book of the Discipline, Volume 4 (Mahavagga)*, 324–325.
7. *'dul ba gzhi*, 4:289a–289b.
8. *lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo*, 49:157a.

   > *ngas nyan thos rnams la gnang ba dang / bdag nyid kyis zos so zhes bya ba 'di ni blo gros chen po gnas med do /*

9. Lindtner, “The Laṅkāvatārasūtra in Early Indian Madhyamaka Literature,” 244–279.
10. Takasaki, “Analysis of the Lankavatara.”
11. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*; blo bzang rgya mtsho, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdo lang gshegs las gsungs tshul.*
12. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, 7:329–333.
13. Scholars disagree on Śāntideva's dates. In her *Moral Theory in Śāntideva's Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Barbra Clayton argues that he lived in the late sixth through early seventh century (31–33). Most other authors, however, date his birth to the late seventh century and his primary activity to the early to mid-eighth century. See Shantideva, *Way of the Bodhisattva*, 178.
14. Śāntideva, *bslab ba kun las btus pa*, 75b–76b (Śāntideva, *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva*, 128–131).
15. John Newman dates the *Vimalaprabhā* to 1012 (Newman, “A Brief History of the Kalachakra,” 65).
16. Puṇḍarīka, *bsdus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od*, 307.
17. Ch: 義淨.
18. Yijing, *Nanhai Jigui Neifa Zhuan*, 54:213.a06–213.a10 (I-Tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*, 58); cf. Benn, “Where Text Meets Flesh,” 316.
19. Benn, “Where Text Meets Flesh,” 316.
20. Śāntideva, *bslab ba kun las btus pa*, 75b–76b (Śāntideva, *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva*, 128–131).
21. Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,” 194–203.
22. Pu Chengzhong, *Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism*, 59–71.
23. Ch: 梁武帝. On Emperor Wu's proclamation in support of vegetarianism, see Pu Chengzhong, *Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism*, 78–98.
24. On vegetarianism in the Song and Yuan dynasties, see Ter Haar, “Buddhist-Inspired Options,” 132–133.
25. Reinders, “Blessed Are the Meat Eaters,” 521–523.
26. karma pakshi, *karma pakshi rang rnam dang skyi lan ring mo*, 102–103.
27. Yi Tai and Zhang Yanyu, eds., *Da Qing Huidian (Yongzheng Chao)*, vol. 27 (787), pt. 3, juan 222, pp. 4a–4b (14409–144010).

    > 四十八年。諭。喇嘛每說念經可救生靈。凡為爾等念經殺牲供食者。豈非生靈。爾等若能不食。並傅內外寺廟眾喇嘛。俱照此例。一年可活二三十萬生靈。*(Special thanks to Sherab Chen for his help with this translation.)*

28. Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, 71–72.
29. Ch: 太虛.
30. As quoted in Luo Tongbing, “The Reformist Monk Taixu and the Controversy About Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism in Republican China,” 442. (The English translation is my own.)

    > 如藏蒙喇嘛之來華傳密也，形服間俗，酒肉公開，於我國素視為僧寶之行儀，棄若弁髦!

31. thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, *thu'u bkwan grub mtha'*, 472 (Thuken Chokyi Nyima, *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*, 357).
32. Ch: 五台山. Tib: ri bo rtse lnga.
33. blo bzang 'phrin las rnam rgyal, *rje btsun dpal ldan bla ma dam pa lcang lung arya pandi ta rin po che ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog nor bu'i do shal*, 6:94.
34. Miehe et al., "How Old Is Pastoralism in Tibet?" 130.
35. Bellezza, "Gods, Hunting and Society," 347–396.
36. Anonymous, *Pelliot Tibétain 126*; cf. Walter, *Buddhism and Empire*, 126.

    sha chang mthong na srog kyang bsdo

37. Walter reaches a similar conclusion (*Buddhism and Empire*, 127).
38. Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger, trans., *dBa' Bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, 47, 133.
39. Martin, *Tibetan Histories*, 23.
40. van Schaik and Iwao, "Fragments of the Testament of Ba from Dunhuang," 77–87.
41. Zhu Xi, *Chu Hsi's Family Rituals*, xxiii.
42. Liu Xu, ed., *Jiu Tang Shu*, 5247–5249; Kapstein, "The Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove," 25; Richardson, *Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 126–127.
43. It is unclear exactly how much of this text represents authentic dialogue between Atiśa and Dromton. Thubten Jinpa has argued that while the final redaction of the text dates only to 1302, a significant core probably does date to recorded conversations from the eleventh century. See Thubten Jinpa, trans., *Book of Kadam*, 25–28.
44. Anonymous, *bka' gdams glegs bam las btus pa'i chos skor*, 45 (Thubten Jinpa, trans. *Book of Kadam*, 99).

    rang theg pa chen por khas blangs nas / gzhi las 'bras zab mo khyad bsad de / zas sha chang sgog gsum gdol pa'i zas /

45. The relationship between Bön and Buddhism is long and complex. Bön claims to represent the pre-Buddhist religion in Tibet. By the eleventh century, however, Bön religiosity was quickly coming to resemble Buddhism in all but name. Metön Sherab Özer himself was a seminal figure in this transformation. See Cech, "A Bonpo Bca' Yig," 69.
46. I have not managed to locate a complete copy of this text. This passage is quoted in the fifteenth-century work: mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan, *'dul bab mdor bsdus kyi 'grel pa*, 49.

    sha zhes bya ba'i mtshan nyid ni / sems can srog gcod rgyu las byung / snying rje med pas dmyal bar ltung / shin tu ya nga mi bza' spang / sha zhes bya ba'i rgyu rkyen ni / pha ma gnyis kyi dkar dmar yin / mig gi mthong na skyi re 'jigs / lag tu blang na ya re nga / sna yi dri tshor skyug re bro / lce yi ro la blang nas su / khong tu stim pa'i lugs ci yod / de yi phyir yang spang bar rigs /

47. Shabkar, writing in the early nineteenth century, claims that Pakmodrupa was vegetarian, though I have found little evidence for this in older material. See zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *rmad byung sprul pa'i glegs bam*, 8:58 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 82).
48. 'jig rten mgon po, *mkhan po chen po seng seng ba'i spyan snga spring ba sogs*, 2:22.
49. 'gos lo zhon nu dpal, *deb ther sngon po*, 707, 727 (Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, 599, 619).
50. Hou Haoran, "Some Remarks on the Transmission of the Ascetic Discipline of the 'Single Mat,' " 215.
51. 'gos lo zhon nu dpal, *deb ther sngon po*, 735 (Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, 599, 619).
52. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance.*
53. dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, *sha chang bkag pa'i lung 'dren rnams*, 6:651–667 (Kaie Mochizuki, "On the Scriptures Introducing the Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol by Dol Po Pa").
54. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa.*
55. Heimbel, "Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)," 323–324.
56. sangs rgyas phun tshogs, *rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa legs bshad chu bo 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho*, 1:527–528.
57. kun dga' grol mchog. *dpal ldan bla ma 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi rnam thar legs bshad khyad par gsum ldan*, 56:320–321; ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams, *mkhyen brtse nus pa'i mnga' bdag rgyal bas sras dang slob mar bcas pa'i spyi gzugs dam pa dus gsum sgrib med du gzigs pa'i rje btsun mus pa chen po sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa byin rlabs kyi char 'bebs ngo mtshar sarga gsum pa*, 158; cf. Heimbel, *Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)*, np.

    > *mdor na sha chang spong ba 'di rang re ngor pa'i phyag bzhes cig yin pas ci nas kyang nan tan du bya dgos pa yin no*

58. This was not to last forever. By the 1930s, Ngor's abbot was able to lament the historical practice of sending monks out to collect animals from the local populace for their meat. See Jackson, "The 'Bhutan Abbot' of Ngor," 93.
59. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus.*
60. 'gos lo zhon nu dpal, *deb ther sngon po*, 592 (Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, 499).

    > *'dul ba'i bcas pa phra mo rnams kyang bsrung zhing / sha dang chang spu rtse tsam yang spyan lam du mi 'grim /*

61. It is possible that this is because vegetarianism had become so common that biographers felt no need to record it. This seems unlikely, however, given that biographers usually highlighted this difficult and respected practice. More likely, vegetarianism simply became less popular during this period. Absence of evidence may not be evidence of absence, but the dearth of sources from this time, especially when compared with the preceding centuries, suggests that while vegetarianism survived during this time, it was notably less common.

62. mi bskyod rdo rje, *gangs ri'i khrod na gnas pa gtso bor gyur pa skyabs med ma rgan tshogs la sha zar mi rung ba'i springs yig sogs*.
63. mi bskyod rdo rje, *dga' tshal karma gzhung lugs gling dang por sgar chen 'dzam gling rgyan du bzhugs dus kyi 'phral gyi bca' yig*, 3:707.
64. sangs rgyas phun tshogs, *dpal e wam chos ldan gyi gdan rabs nor bu'i phreng ba*, 4[25]:42.
65. Karma Phuntsho, *The History of Bhutan*, 225.
66. karma chags med, *sha yi nyes dmigs dang gnang bkag gi sa mtshams dbye ba yul byang phyogs rgyud kyi pandi ta 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung*, 35:451–476.
67. tshe ring bla ma 'jam dpal bzang po, *rgyal dbang dpal yul ba'i gdan rabs ngo mtshar 'chi med yongs 'du'i ljon pa'i phreng ba zhes*, 45, 67 (Tsering Lama Jampal Zangpo, *A Garland of Immortal Wish-Fulfilling Trees*, 63, 76).
68. tshe ring bla ma 'jam dpal bzang po, *rgyal dbang dpal yul ba'i gdan rabs ngo mtshar 'chi med yongs 'du'i ljon pa'i phreng ba zhes*, 67 (Tsering Lama Jampal Zangpo, *A Garland of Immortal Wish-Fulfilling Trees*, 76).
69. Personal communication with Jann Ronis.
70. For more on Jigmé Lingpa's personal vegetarianism, see Barstow, "Buddhism Between Abstinence and Indulgence," 95–96.
71. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri bong shin tu brtan pa'i gtam brag ri'i mgu la rgyan*, 4:772.

    sha ni sdig pa'i zas yin

72. 'jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba'i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma*, 9:125–126.

    ma rgan de dag lus 'dar phri li li / mig mchi ma khram khram /

73. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 1:201a–201b (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 232).
74. Ricard, *Writings of Shabkar*, 21–22.
75. Ricard, *Writings of Shabkar*, 21–22, 31.
76. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 1:481a (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 542).
77. Choying Tobden Dorje, *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra, Books 1 to 10: Foundations of the Buddhist Path*, xliv.
78. chos dbyings stobs ldan rdo rje, *mdo rgyud rin po che'i mdzod,* 2:116 (Choying Tobden Dorje, *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra, Books 1 to 10: Foundations of the Buddhist Path*, 175).
79. Interestingly, Dodrubchen himself does not seem to have engaged with the issue of vegetarianism. His commentary on Jigmé Lingpa's *Chariot of the Two Truths*, for instance, entirely ignores Jigmé Lingpa's critiques of meat. See 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi sgo lcags 'byed byed bsdus 'grel rgya mtsho'i chu thigs rin chen lde mig*.
80. 'jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba'i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma*, 9:402.

81. Anonymous, *'jigs med rgyal ba'i myu gu'i rnam thar*, 69–70.
82. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:103.

    > *da lta bla ma rnam pa tsho yang / yon bdag gi bsha' lug tsho ba dang rgyag pa re bshas nas mid pa dang mtsher pa sogs sha khrag gis g.yos / tshang 'brong gi rtsib sha 'dar cum me ba'i steng du bzhag nas drangs tsa na / mnabs gzan de dbu la 'then nas / nang cha rnams byis pas nu ma nu nu mdzad /*

    Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 70.
83. In particular, he is said to have taught *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* widely; 'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma, *mtshungs bral rgyal ba'i myu gu o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rtogs brjod phyogs tsam gleng ba bdud rtsi'i zil thigs*, 5:458.
84. The text itself is undated. The third Dodrubchen, Jigmé Tenpé Nyima's (1865–1926) *Biography* of Patrül, however, claims that after writing the text Patrül went to visit Shabkar. Shabkar, however, died before Patrül could meet him. Shabkar died in 1851, suggesting that *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* must have been written shortly before then ('jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma, *mtshungs bral rgyal ba'i myu gu o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rtogs brjod phyogs tsam gleng ba bdud rtsi'i zil thigs*, 457).
85. nyag bla padma bdud 'dul, *sha za spong ba la gdams pa*; rig 'dzin gar gyi dbang phyug, *sha zos pa'i nyes pa byams snying rje gsod pa'i zas gcod sems kyi bdud rtsi dang / sgog pa dang / tha ma kha dang / zas*, 2:149–194.
86. se ra mkha' 'gro kun bzang bde skyong dbang mo, *dbus mo bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa nges 'byung 'dren pa'i shing rta skal ldan dad pa'i mchod sdong*, 1:130–131, 356; cf. Jacoby, *Love and Liberation*, 63, 194.
87. For more on Do Khyentsé, see Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 179–197; Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 395–399.
88. Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 212; Surya Das, *The Snow Lion's Turquoise Mane*, 226–227.
89. For more on meat in Tantric Buddhism, see chapter 4 of this book.
90. mi nyag thub bstan chos dar, *mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje'i gdung rgyud rim byon gyi rnam thar gsal ba'i me long*, 247.

    > *nying rjes gzhan dbang du gyur bas / sha khrag gi zas mi gsol ba /*

91. The version of this text that I have access to does not identify an author. I attribute authorship to Karmé Khenpo based on features of the text itself and the nickname provided in the colophon. Anonymous, *Prayer to purify the obscurations of eating specifically slaughtered meat combined with the seven branches [bsngos sha'i sdig sbyong yan lag bdun pa dang 'brel ba'i smon lam]*, 6.
92. gnas gsar bkra shis chos 'phel, *rje kun gzigs 'jam mgon ngag gi dbang phyug yon tan rgya mtsho'i zhabs kyi 'das rjes kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i snang ba*, 95:515 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Autobiography of Jamgon Kongtrul*, 378).

    > *de'i tshe bdag ni sha za mi dgos pa zhig tu skye ba'i smon lam byed pa yin ces yang yang bka' stsal pa'ang thos mod /*

93. kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *rje bla ma rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, 10.
94. dbra ston skal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *rje btsun bla ma dam pa nges pa don gyi gyung drung 'chad dbang dpal shar rdza pa chen po bkra shis rgyal mtsan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba thar 'dod khas pa'i mgul rgyan*, 1:91.
95. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:153.
96. 'jam dpal dpa' bo rdo rje rtsal, *mag gsar bon mang rig 'dzin 'dus pa rgya mtsho'i gdan rabs nor bu'i do shal bzhugs so.*
97. Cech, "A Bonpo Bca' Yig," 80.
98. Despite the importance of this period to understandings of contemporary Tibetan religion, it has remained remarkably understudied. Among the works that treat this period in detail, see Goldstein, Ben Jiao, and Tanzen Lhundrup, *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet*; Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*; Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet.*
99. When I last visited, in 2012, Larung Gar had a population of between ten thousand and thirty thousand monks and nuns (no one was really keeping count), making it quite possibly the largest monastic settlement the world has ever seen. Since then, the Chinese government has evicted many monks and nuns, seeking to lower the total number of residents. Still, the complex remains massive, with thousands of monks and nuns in residence.
100. One woman in her mid-fifties described how she had cried while watching a video disk featuring horrific scenes of animal slaughter combined with a voice-over by Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, and immediately resolved to become vegetarian. Later, she invited her friends over to watch the same VCD, and reported proudly that several of them had become vegetarian as well.
101. The conclusions in this and other passages are based on several periods of fieldwork between 2007 and 2012, including visits to dozens of towns and monasteries and hundreds of individual interviews. Systematic, quantitative research is highly restricted in Tibetan regions of China, so I am unable to estimate precise numbers of contemporary vegetarians.

2. Meat in the Monastery

1. 'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 327–328 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 5: Buddhist Ethics*, 101).
2. 'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 328–329 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 5: Buddhist Ethics*, 102–103).
3. *so sor thar pa'i mdo*, 5:1b–20b (Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*).
4. *'dul ba gzhi*, vols. 1–4.
5. Guṇaprabha, *'dul ba'i mdo*, 159:1a–100b.

6. For an interesting take on this rule involving the use of gold in art, see thub bstan phun tshogs, *thang bla tshe dbang gi rnam thar skor*.
7. On the sometimes surprisingly flexible rule of celibacy, see Ronis, “The Prolific Preceptor,” 59.
8. *so sor thar pa’i mdo*, 5:3b (Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, 51).
9. *so sor thar pa’i mdo*, 5:15a–15b (Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, 87).
10. Skt: *tikoṭiparisuddha*.
11. Many modern accounts describe these non-Buddhists as Jains, though I find nothing in this or other canonical accounts to justify this specific attribution.
12. *‘dul ba gzhi*, 3:25a–25b. For a translation of the corresponding passage from the Pali canon, which features several important differences, see Horner, trans., *The Book of the Discipline, Volume 4 (Mahavagga)*, 324–325. For corresponding passages from alternate recensions of the Vinaya preserved in Chinese, see *Shi Song Lü [Sarvāstivāda Vinaya]*, Taishō Tripiṭaka no. 1435, vol. 26:190b; *Si Fen Lü [Dharmaguptaka Vinaya]*, Taishō Tripiṭaka no. 1428, vol. 22:0872b; *Mi Sha Sai Bu He Xi Wu Fen Lü [Mahīśāsaka Vinaya]*, Taishō Tripiṭaka no. 1421, vol. 22:149c.

    > *[25a] sangs rgyas bcom ldan ‘das yangs pa can gyi spre’u rdzing gi ‘grim na khang pa ba rtsegs pa’i gnas na bzhugs so / / yangs pa can sde dpon seng go zhes bya ba zhig gnas te / / de’i nyi ‘khor na gnas pa rnams kyis de’i ched [25b] du sha khyer te ‘ongs nas de yang za bar byed do / / gang gi tshe des bcom ldan ‘das las bden pa mthong ba de’i tshe mi za bas khyer te ‘ongs nas yang dge slong rnams la sbyin par byed do / / dge slong rnams kyis kyang de dag zos pa dang mu stegs can rnams smod par byed / gzhogs ‘phyas byed / kha zer bar byed de / shes ldan dag sde dpon seng ge’i ched du byas te sha khyer te ‘ongs na ni des de dag ma zos la / shAkya’i sras kyi dge sbyong rnams la byin pa dang / shAkya’i sras kyi dge sbyong rnams kyi ched du byas pa’i sha ni zos so zhesapa’i skabs de dge slong rnams kyis bcom ldan ‘das la gsol pa dang / bcom ldan ‘das kyis bka’ stsal pa / ngas gnas gsum gyis rung ba ma yin pa’i sha bza’ bar mi bya’o zhes gsungs pa gsum gang zhe na / bdag gi ched du byas par mngon du mthong ba rung ba ma yin pa’i sha bza’ bar mi bya’o zhes gsungs pa dang / yid ches pa las khyod kyi ched du byas pa yin no zhes thos pa rung ba ma yin pa’i sha bza’ bar mi bya’o zhes gsungs pa dang / rang nyid kyi blo la rnam par rtog pa skyes ba tshul las ‘di ni bdag gi ched du byas pa yin no snyam du rung ba ma yin pa’i sha bza’ bar mi bya’o zhes gsungs pa yin no / /*

13. gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba, *‘dul ba mdo rtsa ba’i mchan ‘grel padma dkar po’i ljon shing*, 1:583.

    > *za ba po’i phyir sbyin bdag gis sha bsngos par mthong ba dang thos pa dang dogs pa’i sgo nas shes na bza’ bar mi bya’o /*

14. This is not to suggest that monks themselves did this farming. More often, large monasteries had communities of farmers hereditarily attached to them. Generation after generation, these individuals, known as *mi ser* in Tibetan and often referred to as serfs in English, would till the monastery’s land in exchange for a portion of the crop (Goldstein, “Serfdom and Mobility,” 521–534).

15. The *Rulebook* for Dartang Monastery, for instance, expressly forbids slaughterhouses in the vicinity of the monastery. Punishment for violators is financial, including the confiscation of meat (‘jam dpal dgyes pa’i rdo rje, *phan bde’i rtsa ba cha yig*, 188).
16. *‘dul ba gzhi*, 4:289a. Again, this translation is based on the Degé edition of the Tibetan canon. For a translation of the Pali version of this story, which differs in important respects, see I. B. Horner, trans., *The Book of the Discipline, Volume 5 (Cullavagga)*, 275–279.

    shes ldan dag dge sbyong gau ta ma ni zho dang ‘o ma la longs spyod de / / deng phyin chad bdag cag gis longs spyad par mi bya’o / / de ci’i phyir zhe na / gzhi de las be’u rnams la gnod par ‘gyur bas so / / dge sbyong gau ta ma ni sha la longs spyod de / / bdag cag gis longs spyad par mi bya’o / / de ci’i phyir zhe na / gzhi de las srog chags dag gsod par ‘gyur bas so / /

17. yon tan rgya mtsho, *yon tan rin po che’i mdzod kyi ‘grel pa zab don snang byed nyi ma’i ‘od zer*, 280.

    lhas sbyin gyi brtul zhugs lnga

18. sakya paṇḍita kun dga’ rgyal btshan, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba’i bstan bcos*, 34 (Sakya Paṇḍita Künga Gyaltsen, *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes*, 66).

    nyan thos rnam gsum dag pa’i sha / bza’ rung gal te mi za na / lhas byin gyi ni brtul zhugs ‘gyur /

19. *so sor thar pa’i mdo*, 5:13a (Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, 81).

    bcom ldan ‘das kyis dge slong rnams kyi zas bsod pa gang dag gsungs pa ‘di lta ste / ‘o ma dang / zho dang/ mar dang / nya sha dang / sha dang / sha skam dag ste / dge slong mi na bar bdag nyid kyi phyir zas bsod pa de lta bu dag gzhan gyi khyim dag nas bslangs te ‘cha’ ‘am za na ltung byed do / /

20. Anonymous, *bka’ gdams glegs bam las btus pa’i chos skor*, 96 (Thubten Jinpa, trans., *Book of Kadam*, 174). The precise dating of this text is unclear. Thubten Jinpa suggests that while the composition as known today was not finalized until 1302, it was based around an “archaic version” containing genuine dialogues between Atiśa and Dromtön (Thubten Jinpa, trans., *Book of Kadam*, 28).
21. shes rab ‘byung gnas, *‘jig rten gsum gyi mgon po’i rnam par thar pa rdo rje rin po che ‘bar ba*, 176.

    rab tu gshegs nas dro ‘phyis pa yang ma gsol zhing/ sha chang ljags la bstar ma myong ste

22. kun dga’ bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, *rje bla ma rdo rje ‘chang ngag dbang kun dga’ legs pa’i ‘byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu’i ‘phreng ba*, 9–10.

    bod la yar ‘gro dus sgar pa rnams kyis bshas mang po bshas pa la nges ‘byung dang / skyo shas kha tsam min par skyes / phyir lam yang lug ‘ga’ bsad pa mthong

> *bas [10] bsad bya'i sems can de rnams la snying rje bcos ma min pa skyes pa dang / phyin chad 'di 'dra'i sdig las byed pa mig gis mi mthong sar dge sbyor byed pa'i dus shig nam 'ong snyam pa byung zhing / de rnams kyi sha khrag mthong tshe nyen zhag mang po yi ga 'gag nas / kha zas cher za mi mos pa sogs byung bas / gong smos dge slong gi sdom pa zhus nas bzung / sha chang gi bza' btung / phyi dro'i kha zas rnams spangs nas rim gyis /*

23. Jansen, "Selection at the Gate," 139–140.
24. Ronis, "The Prolific Preceptor," 58.
25. mi bskyod rdo rje, *dga' tshal karma gzhung lugs gling dang por sgar chen 'dzam gling rgyan du bzhugs dus kyi 'phral gyi bca' yig*, 3:700.

    > *dir 'dus pa'i dge 'dun thams cad lhag par sha dang sgo nga la longs mi spyod /*

26. Cech, "A Bonpo Bca' Yig," 74, 80.

    > *kha zas sde la mang thun sha dang yu ti chang / sgog gcong rigs / phyi dro'i kha zas*

27. padma dbang 'dus, *gter bdag gling pas rab byung bcu gnyis pa'i sa sbrul lor mdzad pa'i smin gling 'dus sde'i bca' yig ma bu*, 284.

    > *'dir mtha' gcig tu dkar rdor gyi sgrigs ma bcas kyang ston mo sogs dkar gro shas cher bya shing longs spyod kyi gzhi sha la mi byed par ci nas gal che /*

28. ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, *nyang smad bsam don lhun gyis grub pa'i rdzong chen du tshe'i rig byed gso ba rig pa'i grwa tshang drang srong 'dus pa'i gling gi bca' yig*, 23:119; van Vleet, "Medicine, Monasteries and Empire," 166–167.

    > *sha tsha'i spang blang ma gtogs rang 'dod kha khyer gyis phugs gleng brjod mi yong ba byed /*

29. Personal communication with Jed Verity, August 2012. In a revealing anecdote, Verity reports that one monk asked for a piece of beef jerky that Verity had brought with him from the United States, then asked him to not tell anyone about it.
30. Orgyen Lingpa claimed that he did not author this text, simply revealing a text that had been composed and hidden centuries earlier. There is not room here for a full discussion of the tradition of treasure revelation in Tibet, and I will have to refer readers to other works: Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*; Doctor, *Tibetan Treasure Literature*; Gayley, "Ontology of the Past and Its Materialization in Tibetan Treasures," 213.
31. o rgyan gling pa, *padma bka' thang*, 302 (Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 144).

    > *dge 'dun skom du dkar dang ja gsol cig / zas su bru dang bur sgrang mar thud gsol / . . . chang nag sha dang lhad zas ma sten cig /*

32. o rgyan gling pa, *padma bka' thang*, 302 (Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 144).

    > *zas su ci dgar longs spyod dug ma za /*

33. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:601 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 115).

> *sngon sangs rgyas 'khor bcas kyi zas bsod snyoms gnas shing drung ba yin pa'i gnas nges med / zas nor gyi gsog 'jog dang nyo tshong mi byed pas sha yi nyo tshong mi byed pa smos ci dgos / de ltar mdzad pa la rnam gsum dag pa zhig ma gtogs log 'tsho 'ong thabs med la / deng sang grong dgon pa btab / khyim pa las lhag gi gsog 'jog rgya chen po byas / de'i thag nyer shan pa bsam bzhin sdod du bcug / shan pas kyang dge 'dun pas sha nyo yong shag byas bsad/ dge 'dun pas kyang bsad nas sha mang po yod shag byas nyos / gsod mkhan nyo mkhan gnyis ka'i rgyu rkyen la brten nas sems can ra lug brgya stong mang po'i srog mngon sum gcod pa 'di la nyes pa gang yang med / rnam gsum dag pa yin na thams cad dag pa rab 'byams 'ba' zhig tu song 'dug pas /*

34. mi bskyod rdo rje, *gangs ri'i khrod na gnas pa gtso bor gyur pa skyabs med ma rgan tshogs la sha zar mi rung ba'i springs yig sogs*, 9.

> *bza' ba po'i dmigs rkyen dang por med na/ bsod pa po'i bdag rkyen phyis mi 'byung bas/ de lta na gsod pa'i las dngos mi 'byung la/ de dag yod na de 'byung*

35. I have not managed to locate a complete copy of this text, so have relied on a quotation found in the fifteenth-century work, mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan, *'dul bab mdor bsdus kyi 'grel pa*, 49.

> *sha zhes bya ba'i mtshan nyid ni/ sems can srog gcod rgyu las byung /*

36. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri dwags kyi gtam nges 'byung gi pho nya*, 4:759 (Jigme Lingpa, "The Story of the Hunted Deer," 7).

> *gsod pa rngon pa ngas gsod kyang/ za ba dge spyong rnams kyis za / za dang gsod pa'i sdig pa la / khyad par yod na gad mo bro /*

37. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri dwags kyi gtam nges 'byung gi pho nya*, 759 (Jigme Lingpa, "The Story of the Hunted Deer," 7).

> *tshul min spyod pa'i dge sbyong dang / 'dul khrims srung ba'i nyan thos kyi/ nyis brgya lnga bcu'i khrims rtsal / las kyis bda' 'ded 'phyugs ba med/*

38. *lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo*, 49:155b.

> *gal te ji ltar yang su'ang sha mi za na ni de'i phyir srog chags rnams kyang gsod par mi 'gyur na /*

39. go rams pa, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba*, 9:119.

> *kho bo'i rtog pa la ni / 'dul ba las dang por bslab pa'i gzhi rim gyis 'cha' ba'i dus su sha gnang zhing / phyis bslab gzhi yongs su rdzogs nas / lang gshegs dang / myang 'das chen po gsungs pa phyin chad nas / nyan thos rnams la yang bkag ste / sngar drangs pa'i myang 'das chen por / ngas rim gyis bslab pa'i gzhi bsdams pa'i phyir de yang ngas dang por zhes dang / [rigs kyi bu phyin chad nga'i*

nyan thos rnams sha bzar mi rung ngo /] This final phrase is not actually found in this location in the text. Gorampa has cited this passage previously, and expects his readers to remember the rest of this quote.

40. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 343.

    rnam gsum dag pa'i sha yin kyang / sha la sred pa'i bag chags shin tu mthug pos rgyud la bsgos pa'i byang sems las dang bo bdag la ni / rang don du sha'i ro la chags pa'i sred pa'i dbang gis byang sems rang gi bza' byar ma brtags pa ste . . . byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyis sha ni / rnam thams cad du mi za'o /

41. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 343.

    sha'i ro la chags pa'i sred pa'i dbang gis sha za ba rung bar 'dul ba las gnang ngo zhes kho bo cag ni / rnam pa thams cad du mi smra la / de 'dra ba skyon med par gnyid kyi rmi lam du yang mi smra'o /

42. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:153.

    dus zas pa yi shi sha

43. go rams pa, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba*, 9:118.

    de la rnam gsum yongs su dag pa'i sha zos na spong ba'i bar chad du mi 'gyur ro

44. *'dul ba gzhi*, 4:289a.
45. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, 7:325.

    de'i dgongs pa ni / lhas byin la sogs pa sha spangs pa tsam gyis dag par lta ba dang / . . . rjes su bjung ba la dgongs pa yin

46. mi bskyod rdo rje, *gangs ri'i khrod na gnas pa gtso bor gyur pa skyabs med ma rgan tshogs la sha zar mi rung ba'i springs yig sogs*, 8a.

    lha byin sha mi za ba nyid kyis grol bar khas 'che ba bzhin rang nyid kyang de'i rjes su 'jug tshul de ltas grol bar rom nas sha ma bzas na dbyen gtogs kyi sbom por 'gyur ba yin gyi / spyir shAkya'i nyan thos kyis sha ma zas na lha byin gyi brtul zhugs su 'gyur ba lung des bstan pa ma yin pa'i phyir

47. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:609 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 121).

    de la gnang tshul ni / so thar skabs su / yul mdo smad nas dbus gtsang lta bu'i thag ring re phyin tshe lam nas za rgyu ma rnyed / ma zos na srog gi bar chad du 'grol dus dang / nad pa zungs zad 'chi la nye ba sha zhig ma zos na mi 'tsho bar thag chod pa'i dus dang /

48. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:612 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 123).

> *sha'i nyes dmigs dran par byas la sha la sred pa skyes pa spangs te /*

49. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 328.

> *sha'i ro la chags pa'i sred pa'i dbang gis ni / rnam gsum dag ma dag dang bsad pa dang shi ba gang gi sha yang bzar mi rung ba / . . . de dag la 'di dri bar bya ste / ci 'dul ba las rab tu byung ba dag la sha bkag*

50. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 330.

> *rmig gcig pa sogs bza' mi rung ba'i sha dmigs kyis bkar nas gsungs pas kyang de dag las gzhan pa'i sha rnams bzar ru bar shes te / sha tsam 'gog par bzhed na spyir bkag pas chog gi sha'i bye brag re re nas smos nas bkag ga la dgos /*

51. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 356.

> *sha'i ro la chags pa'i sred pa'i dbang gis ni / rnam gsum dag ma dag dang bsad pa dang shi ba gang gi sha yang bzar mi rung ba /*

52. Clarke, *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms*, 11.
53. For a classic discussion of the consequences of inadequate financial support in the Indian Buddhist context, see Falk, "The Case of the Vanishing Nuns," 207–224.
54. 'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 339 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 5: Buddhist Ethics*, 128).

> *de bas na gos tshags mthong na yid du 'ong zhing spyod lam zhi dul dang ldan pas bsod snyoms kyi khyim du 'jug cing mnyam par bzhag pa'i 'dug stangs kyis 'khod la bag yod pas bza' btung la longs spyod cing / dran pa mngon du bshag nas chos kyi gtam skabs dang 'tshams pas mgu ba bskyed par bya ba yin no /*

55. Jansen, "Selection at the Gate," 140.
56. 'jigs med ye shes grags pa, *dpal snar thang dang rwa sgreng dgon lung byams pa gling dgon ma lag bcas kyi bca' yig 'dul khrims dngos brgya 'bar ba'i gzi 'od*, 23:31b.

> *dbyar chos skabs su ming btags pa dang tshogs langs pa rnams / chos thog so so'i spying bdag bcas pas sha'i dga' stong gtan nas mi dzad cing/*

57. Jansen, "Monastic Guidelines," 446–447.
58. While monks were expected to avoid heterosexual contact, there is some evidence to suggest that homosexual contact was more acceptable, and possibly widespread. See Goldstein, Tashi Tsering, and Siebenschuh, *The Struggle for Modern Tibet*, 26–30.
59. o rgyan gling pa, *padma bka' thang*, 302 (Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 144).

> *zas su ci dgar longs spyod dug ma za /*

60. Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*, 116–121; Gorvine, "The Life of a Bönpo Luminary," 52–71.
61. 'gos lo zhon nu dpal, *deb ther sngon po*, 592 (Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, 499).

    'dul ba'i bcas pa phra mo rnams kyang bsrung zhing / sha dang chang spu rtse tsam yang spyan lam du mi 'grim /

62. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, *Blazing Splendor*, 198.
63. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 1:201a–201b (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 232).
64. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 410b (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 468).
65. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:103 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 70).

    da lta bla ma rnam pa tsho yang / . . . zhal snum chil le / dbu rlang pa phal le / sngar gyi de ma yin pa'i rgya dmar tsig ge ba zhig byas

66. yon tan rgya mtsho, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa bden gnyis gsal byed zla ba'i sgron me*, 1:225.

    deng sang khyed cag bla ma mkhan slob dang / / dge 'dun ming btags chos pa'i gzugs bzung nas / / shi gson kun gyi skyabs yul byed mkhan tsho / / pha mar gyur pa'i sems can srog bcad pa'i / / sha la lto yi dwangs ma byed nus pa'i / / snying stobs 'di 'dra'i che lugs a la la

67. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, 7:324–329.
68. Heimbel, "Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)," 325.
69. Heimbel, "Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)," 324.
70. Heimbel, "The Jo Gdan Tshogs Sde Bzhi," 223–224.

3. The Importance of Compassion

1. klong chen ye shes rdo rje, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi mchan 'grel theg gsum bdud rtsi'i nying khu*, 54 (Jigme Lingpa and Longchen Yeshe Dorje, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 158).
2. klong chen ye shes rdo rje, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi mchan 'grel theg gsum bdud rtsi'i nying khu*, 54 (Jigme Lingpa and Longchen Yeshe Dorje, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 158).

    ma rig pa'i 'du byed pa

3. This compassionate orientation is expressed in countless prayers and liturgies. For some examples in English, see Lopez, ed., *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, 270, 280, 378, and 408.

4. White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," 1205.
5. Augustin, *De Moribus Manichaeorum*, 32:1370. This translation is by Susan Crane, in a personal message to the author, January 29, 2015.

> *Videmus enim et vocibus sentiums, cum dolore mori animantia, quod quidem homo contemnit in bestia, cum qua scilicet rationalem animam non habente, nulla legis societate copulatur.*

6. René Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, 5:277. As translated in Cottington, " 'A Brute to the Brutes?' " 553.

> *Deinde quia rationi consentaneum videtur, cum ars sit naturae imitatrix, possintque homines varia fabricare automata, in quibus sine ulla cogitatione est motus, ut natura etiam sua automata, sed artefactis longe praestantiora, nempe bruta omnia, producat.*

7. For more on Descartes's influence on contemporary interspecies relations, see Steiner, "Descartes, Christianity, and Contemporary Speciesism."
8. mi bskyod rdo rje, *gangs ri'i khrod na gnas pa gtso bor gyur pa skyabs med ma rgan tshogs la sha zar mi rung ba'i springs yig sogs*.
9. klong chen ye shes rdo rje, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi mchan 'grel theg gsum bdud rtsi'i nying khu*, 15 (Jigme Lingpa and Longchen Yeshe Dorje, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 118).

> *bdag tu bzung ba mi la brten pa'i dud 'gro thams cad ni bkol ba'i phyir sga srab sna thag sogs 'dul bar byed pa'i bdag pos 'dzin cing zhon 'gel btags ded bya gcod spu 'breg gson khrag 'byin pa sogs kyis gnod pas nyam thag*

10. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:121 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 80).

> *tsha ru yang lu gu 'phral du skyes pa de dbang po thams cad rdzogs/ bde sdug gi tshor ba dang ldan/ lus kyang nyams brtas/ gson pa'i dang po skyid par yod pa'i dus su 'phral du bsad pa yin/ rmongs pa dud 'gro yin yang 'chi ba la ni 'tsher/ gson pa la ni dga'/ gnad gcod kyi sdug bsngal ni myong/*

11. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 98.
12. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *bya btang tshogs drug rang grol gyis phyogs med ri khrod 'grims pa'i tshe rang gzhan chos la bskul phyir glu dbyangs dga' ston 'gyed pa*, 4:38a.

> *ston dus su / / ra lug g.yag gsum sa la bsgyel / / kha sna bsums nas bsad gyur na / / ra lug gsod mkhan de nyid dang / / sod ces zer bas gtso byas pa'i / / sha zos khu 'thung thams cad po / / phyi mar dmyal ba'i nang du skye / / sdug bsngal yun ring bar du myong /*

13. Padmasambhava, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.
14. Cuevas, *Travels in the Netherworld*, 26.

15. ‘jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba’i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse’i ‘od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs ‘du’i snye ma*, 9:125–126.

> *sdig can shan pa zer bde’i lag tu rang gi skye ba sngon ma’i pha dang / ma dang / spun zla gnyen bshes la sogs pa de dag mthar chags su rtsis sprod byas ba’i tshe / ma rgan de dag lus ‘dar phri li li / mig mchi ma khram khram / dbugs spud pa lhed lhed pa’i ngang nas ‘di snyam du/ da ci drag kyi hud / ‘bros sa ni med/ ‘phur ni mi thug / da lta nyid du sa ‘dir dim na dim na snyam pa’i sdug bsngal dos drag la lcid che / ‘jigs skrag gi snang ba dmyal me’i dong khar lhags pa lta bu’i ngang der/ lus gnam sa bsgyur / brang dred tsha lam lam byed cing mig spo hur hur / lta bzhin pa de’i lto ba gris kha phye / lag pa shad de btang nas ‘gul ba tsam yang med par ‘jig rten phyi ma’i lam por btang ba yin ‘dug pas /*

16. dpal sprul o rgyan ‘jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon ‘gro’i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma’i zhal lung*, 7:314–315 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 203).

> *khyad par bsha’ lug sogs gsod pa’i skabs / dang po mang po’i khyu nas bzung ba’i tshe / de la ‘jigs skrag gi snang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa yod pas / . . . za phod pa ‘di las kyi srin po dngos so ‘dug /*

17. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam ‘phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 1:201a–201b (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 232).

> *skor lam nas ra lug shan pas gsod pa mang po mthong bas rkyen byas / ltar ‘dzin rten khams na gsod pa rnams la snying rje shas mi bzod pa zhig skyes nas slar jo bo’i mdun du song / byag ‘tshal nas / phyin chad sdig zas pha ma’i sha mi za ba’i dam bcas phul ba*

18. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *‘gro ba mgon zhabs dkar ba’i sku tshe’i smad kyi rnam thar thog mtha’i bar du dge ba yid bzhin nor bu dgos ‘dod kun ‘byung*, 2:244b.

> *srog gcod pa’i rtsa ba sha ‘di la thug ‘dug/*

19. Skt: *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna Sūtra*. Tib: *‘phags pa dam pa’i chos dran pa nye bar bzhag pa’i mdo*
20. klong chen ye shes rdo rje, *yon tan rin po che’i mdzod kyi mchan ‘grel theg gsum bdud rtsi’i nying khu*, 59 (Jigme Lingpa and Longchen Yeshe Dorje, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 162).

> *bsdus ‘joms ni / da lta bsad pa’i srog chags kyi mgo brnyan du yod pa’i brag ri phan tshun ‘thab pa’i bar bcar ba*

21. ‘jigs med gling pa, *yon tan rin po che’i mdzod dga’ ba’i char*, 1:15 (Jigmé Lingpa and Longchen Yeshe Dorje, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 27).

> *srog gcod ni / ‘du shes ma ‘khrul gzhan srog bsam bzhin gcod /*

22. mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan, *‘dul bab mdor bsdus kyi ‘grel pa*, 49.

> *rnam smin ngan pa khra dang gcan spyang dang / lha 'dre dregs pa can du skye ba dang / mthar thug dmyal bar skye ba la sogs*

23. nyag bla padma bdud 'dul, *sha za spong ba la gdams pa* (Nyala Pema Duddul, "Song of Advice for Giving Up the Eating of Meat").
24. yon tan rgya mtsho, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa bden gnyis gsal byed zla ba'i sgron me*, 1:226.

> *las kyi khrims ra 'di ru slebs dus su / / skyid sdug ci 'dug ltos dang dkor zan tsho / / ma gi sha khang nag po'i btson khang na / / khyed rang rnams kyi sha yi za lugs dang / / byed lugs mthun pa'i bkod pa du ma bcas/*

25. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:150–151.

> *yang sems can g.yag lta bu zhig bsad pa la mtshon na / g.yag 'di zhes bya ba gsod na sha tshon pho che 'dug snyam pa'i skabs / gsod rgyu g.yag yin pa shes pa gzhi'i yan lag / rang ngam gzhan gyis sems can g.yag de nor khyur nas bzung nas rke la thag pa bzhag pa'i skabs / bsam pa gsod sems skyes pa bsam pa'i yan lag / des bsha' rar khrid cing rkang lag thag pas bskyig / lus gnam sa bsgyur / mchu thag gus dkri ba'i skabs gsod thabs lag tu len pa sbyor ba'i yan lag / de nas dbugs kyi rgyu 'grul chod / lus sems kyi tshogs pa gyes te mig sngo cer gyis song ba'i skabs mthar thug srog gi dbang po 'gags pa mthar thug gi yan lag go / de lta bu'i srog pa ni kun slong 'dod chags kyis byas pas gnas yi dwags su 'phen pa'i las yin te / 'dod chags chu ltar khol ba'i rnam smin gyis / yi dwags bkres skom gnas su 'khyams su nye / zhes mdo las gsung so /*

26. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 342.

> *sems can de gsod pa bo dang sdig mnyam du 'byung bar smra ba ni / las 'bras la skur ba 'debs pa yin te rang gis bsam bzhin du ma nor bar gzhan bsad pa'i las ni / byas la bsags pa'i las zhes bya rnam smin myong nges kyi las dang / rang gis mtho yor du 'khrul te rdo 'phangs pas mi'i mgo la 'phog ste bsad pa lta bu srog gcod pa'i sbyor ba byas kyang kun slong ma rdzogs pa yang byas la ma bsags pa'i las zhes bya ba rnam smin myong bar ma nges pa'i las su mdo dang bstan bcos phal che ba nas gsungs pa la / srog gcod pa'i kun slong ma 'gyus shing gsod pa'i sbyor ba gang yang ma byas par tshong dus su sha nyos nas zos pa tsam la sems can gsod pa bo dang rnam smin mtshungs par myong na las ma byas pas rnam smin myong bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro*

27. Holler, "The Ritual of Freeing Lives."
28. ngag dbang dpal bzang, *mkhan po ngag chung gi rang rnam*, 164 (Khenpo Ngawang Palzang, *Wondrous Dance of Illusion*, 169–170).
29. Khenpo Ngakchung may not have been vegetarian, but he does praise vegetarianism in others, as in his reflections on Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu's rejection of meat. (ngag dbang dpal bzang, *mkhan po ngag chung gi rang rnam*, 79–80 (Khenpo Ngawang Palzang, *Wondrous Dance of Illusion*, 84–85)).

30. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *bya btang tshogs drug rang grol gyis phyogs med ri khrod 'grims pa'i tshe rang gzhan chos la bskul phyir glu dbyangs dga' ston 'gyed pa*, 4:37b.

    > *sha bcod nus na phan yon che / dkar phyogs lha rnams sprin bzhin 'du / rtag tu bsrung zhing mgon skyabs byed / tshe ring nad med lus sems bde / phyi mar lha mi'iu nang du skye /*

31. 'jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba'i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma*, 9:14.

    > *khyad par sems can gyi srog gcod pa mthong zhing thos pa'am / khyi rab sogs kyi byed spo yod yid la dran pa tsam nas rang yang shin ti sdug bsngal zhing / sems can 'di dag sdug bsngal 'di las da lta nyid du thar na snyam pa dang / 'di thams cad kyi srog bskyab pa'i gnyer khang la yod na snyam pa dang / sems can gsod pa'i nam zla shar ba tsam nas rnams pa kun tu gnas skabs 'di na mi bzad pa'i las 'di lta bu zhig yod 'ong snyam nas snying rje'i blo bcos min du skye ba 'di da lta'i bar du yod pas tshad med bzhi'i blo sbyong gi tshig tsam 'bum ther gsog pa bo las bcos min gyi snying rje shugs drag skye ba 'di don gyi chod che bar 'gyur grang snyams pa 'di bdag gi rnam thar bzang shos yin /*

32. 'jigs med gling pa, *mdo sngags zung du 'jug pa'i spyod yul lam khyer sangs rgyas lam zhugs*, 8:723 (Jigme Lingpa, "Entering into the Path of Enlightenment," 133).

    > *snyam du bsam mno zhig btang na blog zur gnas shig yin phyin chad snying rtsi shum shum ba dad sems can de la snying rje dbang med du mi skye ba'i thabs med / de'i tshe byang chub kyi sems mtshan nyid dang ldan pa ma byung kyang rjes mthun zhig nges par skye ba*

33. Barstow, "Buddhism Between Abstinence and Indulgence," 95–96.
34. nyag bla padma bdud 'dul, *sha za spong ba la gdams pa*, 162 (Nyala Pema Duddul, "Song of Advice for Giving Up the Eating of Meat," 2).

    > *spangs na . . . shugs 'byung byams dang snying rje'i rgyu byed cing /*

35. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *'gro mgon zhabs dkar ba'i sku tshe'i smad kyi rnam thar thog mtha'i bar du dge ba yid bzhin nor bu dgos 'dod kun 'byung*, 2:488.

    > *thams cad mkhyen pa'i go 'phang ni / byang chub kyi sems las byung / di snying rje'i rtsa ba las byung / snying rje chen po rgyud la skye ba'i gegs kyi cha shos ni / sha'i sred pa 'di yin par 'dug pas sha 'di cig spong thub na nyes byas kyi sgo mang po zhig kheg nas/ dngos sam brgyud /nas bstan pa dang 'gro ba yongs la phan thogs re 'byung*

36. Sobisch, *The Three-Vow Theories in Tibetan Buddhism*, 13.
37. Sobisch, *The Three-Vow Theories in Tibetan Buddhism*, 15.
38. sakya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal btshan, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos*, 34. (Sakya Paṇḍita Künga Gyaltsen, *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes*, 66).

> *nyan thos rnam gsum dag pa'i sha/ bza' rung gal te mi za na / lhas byin gyi ni brtul zhugs 'gyur /*

39. sakya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal btshan, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos*, 34 (Sakya Paṇḍita Künga Gyaltsen, *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes*, 66).

> *theg pa che las sha rnams bkag / zos na ngan 'gro'i rgyu ru gsungs /*

40. go rams pa, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba*, 9:120.

> *theg pa chen po las / dang po nyid nas rnam gsum dag pa dang / ma dag pa'i sha rnams thams cad bkag cing / zos na ngan 'gro'i rgyur gsungs pa'i phyir ro /*

41. dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, *sha chang bkag pa'i lung 'dren rnams*, 6:659 (Kaie Mochizuki, "On the Scriptures Introducing the Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol by Dol Po Pa," 36).

> *dang po nyan thos gsungs gi bslab par bya / tshong dus 'drim zhing ched du ma bsad pa tsam zhig gnang ngo /*

42. dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, *sha chang bkag pa'i lung 'dren rnams*, 6:659 (Kaie Mochizuki, "On the Scriptures Introducing the Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol by Dol Po Pa," 36).

> *gnyis pa byang chub sems dpa'i bslab bya bar sha ye nas gnang ba med de /*

43. go rams pa, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba*, 9:119.

> *kho bo'i rtog pa la ni / 'dul ba las dang por bslab pa'i gzhi rim gyis 'cha' ba'i dus su sha gnang zhing / phyis bslab gzhi yongs su rdzogs nas / lang gshegs dang/ myang 'das chen po gsungs pa phyin chad nas/ nyan thos rnams la yang bkag ste /*

44. o rgyan gling pa, *padma bka' thang*, 302 (Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 144).

> *zas su ci dgar longs spyod*

45. On Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu's personal vegetarianism, see Anonymous, *'jigs med rgyal ba'i myu gu'i rnam thar*, 69–70. I have not found writings on meat from Jigmé Gyelwé Nyügu's own hand. However, his teachings on this topic were preserved by his student Patrül Rinpoché in the latter's *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, which contains several extended denunciations of meat.
46. nyag bla padma bdud 'dul, *sha za spong ba la gdams pa*, 161 (Nyala Pema Duddul, "Song of Advice for Giving Up the Eating of Meat," 2).

> *khyod la byams dang snying rje mi gnas sam / snying rje 'byongs na sha za nus ma 'os /*

47. 'jam dpal dpa' bo rdo rje rtsal, *mag gsar bon mang rig 'dzin 'dus pa rgya mtsho'i gdan rabs nor bu'i do shal bzhugs so*.

4. Tantric Perspectives

1. Some Tibetans have argued vociferously that the view of tantra is actually superior to that of sutra, but the details of this debate are beyond the scope of this book.
2. ‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 577 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 6, Part 4: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, 78).

   > *mthar thug gi ‘bras bu don du gnyer bya mi gnas pa’i myang ‘das tsam du gcig kyang / lam gyi ‘jug sgo dbang bskur ba sngon du song ba’i sgo nas lha sgom zhing sngags bzla ba la sogs thabs kyi cha la ma rmongs pa dang /*

3. ‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 579 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 6, Part 4: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, 83).

   > *de’ang myur ba ni / dus skyes ba ‘di’am skye ba bdun la sogs par byang chub thob pa*

4. van Schaik, “The Limits of Transgression,” 64.
5. On the dating of this text, see Newman, “A Brief History of the Kalachakra,” 65.
6. Puṇḍarīka, *bsdus pa’i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi ‘khor lo’i ‘grel bshad rtsa ba’i rgyud kyi rjes su ‘jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa’i ‘od*, 12:5b.

   > *da ni sgron ma lnga gsungs te / ba lang dang / khyi dang / so ldan dang / rta dang mi rnams*

7. For more on the history of cow veneration in India, see Doniger, *The Hindus*.
8. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 119.
9. van Schaik, “The Limits of Transgression,” 64.
10. ‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 381–382 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 5: Buddhist Ethics*, 253).
11. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 122.
12. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 168.
13. ‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 381–382 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 5: Buddhist Ethics*, 253–256).
14. DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, 69.
15. DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, 110.
16. lo chen dharma sri, *sdom gsum rnam par nges pa’i legs bshad ngo mtshar dpag bsam gyi snye ma*, 6:277b.

   > *rigs kyis dregs shing nga rgyal dang gtsang dme’i rtog pa gzhig pa’i slad du yul dbus su bza’ ba’i don du gsod par mi byed pa’i sha lnga gnang ba ltar rang gi las kyis shi ba’i sha rnams dam tshig gi rdzas su rung bas bza’ bar bya zhing /*

17. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:323 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 208).

    sha'i ro la sred pas grong yul du bag med du zos na / dang / blang gi dam tshig bag med du spyad pa zhes bya ste / de yang 'gal /

18. 'jigs med gling pa, *bla ma dgongs pa'i 'dus pa'i cho ga'i rnams bzhag dang 'brel ba'i bskyed rdzogs zung 'jug gi sgrom mkhyen brtse'i me long 'od zer brgya ba*, 4:303–304.

    tshogs kyi yo byad ni sha lnga dang / bdud rtsi lnga dang / sha chang / sgog btsong / nya phag la sogs dman pa dang btsog par blta dgos pa thams cad tshogs pa yin phyir / de'i dbang gi zhim mngar gtsang btsog thams cad la bzang ngan dang gtsang me'i gnyis rtogs med par / thams cad mnyam pa nyid du rtogs nas bdud rtsi'i rang bzhin du longs sbyod dgos pa ste /

19. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri bong shin tu brtan pa'i gtam brag ri'i mgu la rgyan*, 4:772.

    sha ni dig pa'i zas yin

20. karma chags med, *sha yi nyes dmigs dang gnang bkag gi sa mtshams dbye ba yul byang phyogs rgyud kyi paṇḍi ta 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung*, 35:474.

    gal te gtan nas tshogs sha ma zos na gsang sngags kyi rtsa ltung bcug gsum pa phog ste /

21. karma chags med, *sha yi nyes dmigs dang gnang bkag gi sa mtshams dbye ba yul byang phyogs rgyud kyi paṇḍi ta 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung*, 35:474.

    grog srin rkang lag tsam yan chad

22. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, 7:336.

    bla med kyi dkyil 'khor du dbang bskur ba zhu pa'i tshe / gsang dbang gi rdzas bsten pa sogs bshad pas de dag dang 'gal lo zhe na / de la gsang dbang gi don du byang sems kyi dod / / chang ngam / sprang ngam / zho la sogs pa gang rung la bya bar rje btsun sa skya pa rnams kyis bshad la / de dag gis thig le tsam zhig lce la myong bar bshad pa yin gyi / shin tu rgyags pa'i sha chang bsten par bshad pa med do /

23. bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, *dpal bka' 'dus kyi mchog gi phrin las dam rdzas bdud rtsi'i sgrub thabs bde chen grub pa'i bcud len*, 5:596–597.
24. bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, *dpal bka' 'dus kyi mchog gi phrin las dam rdzas bdud rtsi'i sgrub thabs bde chen grub pa'i bcud len*, 7:596.
25. Cantwell, "The Medicinal Accomplishment (sman Sgrub) Practice in the Dudjom Meteoric Iron Razor (gnam Lcags Spu Gri) Tradition."
26. rig 'dzin gar gyi dbang phyug, *sha zos pa'i nyes pa byams snying rje gsod pa'i zas gcod sems kyi bdud rtsi dang / sgog pa dang / tha ma kha dang / zas*, 2:153.

    khyed cag ci zer pha ma'i sha khrag gis phan rung ngas ni kha mi the thebs / debs na'am shi na dga' gsungs shing spangs pa yin /

27. rig 'dzin gar gyi dbang phyug, *sha zos pa'i nyes pa byams snying rje gsod pa'i zas gcod sems kyi bdud rtsi*, 2:154.

    lha sngags ting 'dzin gyi nus pas bslangs thub khrub na ma gtogs sha khrag bza' ba ni bka' mdo thud rnams las bkag ba mang ngo /

28. mi bskyod rdo rje, *'dul ba mdo rtsa ba'i rgya cher 'grel spyi'i don mtha' dpyad dang bsdus don sa bcad dang 'bru yi don mthar chags su gnyer ba bcas 'dzam bu'i gling gsal bar byed pa'i rgyan nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor*, 7:543.

    'o na sha chang de chos can/ dam tshig pa'i bdud rtsir byed pa la sha chang de gnas gyur dgos sam mi dgos

29. mi bskyod rdo rje, *'dul ba mdo rtsa ba'i rgya cher 'grel spyi'i don mtha' dpyad dang bsdus don sa bcad dang 'bru yi don mthar chags su gnyer ba bcas 'dzam bu'i gling gsal bar byed pa'i rgyan nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor*, 7:543.

    dgos na der rung yang de gnas gyur pa'i nus ldan de sngags bla med kyi sbyor lam thob dgos pa'i phyir /

30. mi bskyod rdo rje, *'dul ba mdo rtsa ba'i rgya cher 'grel spyi'i don mtha' dpyad dang bsdus don sa bcad dang 'bru yi don mthar chags su gnyer ba bcas 'dzam bu'i gling gsal bar byed pa'i rgyan nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor*, 7:542–544.
31. bdud 'joms gling pa, *gter chen chos kyi rgyal po khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam par thar pa zhal gsungs ma*, 19:228 (Traktung Dudjom Lingpa, *A Clear Mirror*, 169).

    de la mkhas pa rnams kyis sha khrag mchod rdzas la bsham mi rung zer bas de ci yin dris pas /

32. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, 7:335–336.

    gal te rgyud sde 'og ma gsum la zhugs pa'i gang zag gis sha chang spang dgos pa bden na yang rnal 'byor chen po la zhugs pa'i gang rnams kyis de lta ma yin te / dka' thub sdom pa mi bsad pas / / lus gdungs gyur na mi 'grub ste / / 'dod pa'i longs spyod thams cad la / / bsten na myur du 'grub par 'gyur / / zhes sha chang spang ba sogs kyi dka' thub kyis ye shes mi 'grub par bshad pa dang 'gal zhe na /

33. ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, *spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, 7:336.

    lung de'i don / slob dpon zla ba grags pas / lus ngal zhing dub pa'i sbyor bas gtsug lag khang la sogs pa bsgrub pa'i dka' thub dang / shing drung la sogs pa'i sbyang pa'i yon tan bcu gnyis kyi sdom pa dang / ri las mchongs shing 'jug pa la sogs pa mi bzad pa ste / de rnams la brten cing gdungs bzhin pas ni 'grub par mi 'gyur te / byang chub rnyed par mi 'gyur ro / zhes phyi rol pa'i ri la mchongs pa sogs kyi dka' thub la bshad kyi / sha chang spong ba tsam dka' thub tu ma bshad do /

34. Tilopa's story is well known and can be found in many versions. The most extensive English-language version that I am aware of is Mar-pa Chos-Kyi Blo-Gros, *The Life of the Mahāsiddha Tilopa.*

35. ‘jigs med gling pa, *mdo sngags zung du ‘jug pa’i spyod yul lam khyer sangs rgyas lam zhugs*, 8:723 (Jigme Lingpa, “Entering into the Path of Enlightenment,” 133).

    > *rdo rje theg pa’i skabs su’ang ting nge ‘dzin gyi nus pa mngon du gyur nas rang la sgrib pas mi gos shing / sems can de la sha khrag gi ‘brel pas phan thog nus pa yin na dang go bcad / bdag la de ltar gyi gdeng mi bdug / . . . snyam du bsam mno*

36. ‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, *shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, 585 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book 6, Part 4: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, 101).

    > *phyi yi kun spyod gtsor ston bya ba’i rgyud / phyi’i kun spyod khrus dang gtsang sbra sogs gtso bor ston pa’i sgo nas sngags kyi spyad pa spyod pa’i phyir bya ba’i rgyud ces bya ste /*

37. For a thorough description of the nyüngné ritual in English, see Wangchen Rinpoche, *Buddhist Fasting Practice*.
38. Jackson, “A Fasting Ritual,” 274–275.
39. don yod grub pa, *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba’i ti’ka bstan pa’i sgrom me*, 2:136–137.

    > *zho dang mar dang ‘o ma ste dkar gsum dang / ka ra bu ram sbrang rtsi ste dngar gsum la sogs pa’i bza’ ba dang / gtsang sbra dang / smyung gnas la sogs pa’i brtul zhugs kyis bya ba’i rgyud kyi gsang sngags grub ste /*

40. padma nyin byed dbang po, *yan lag brgyad pa’i gso sbyong smyung gnas sgrub thabs dang ‘brel ba’i phan yon mdor bsdus skal ldan ngal gso*, 3:491–492.
41. Havnevik, *Tibetan Buddhist Nuns*, 112–113; Gutschow, “The Smyung Gnas Fast in Zangskar,” 155–156; Ortner, *Sherpas through Their Rituals*, 33–61.
42. Havnevik, *Tibetan Buddhist Nuns*, 113; Gutschow, “The Smyung Gnas Fast in Zangskar,” 153, 157.
43. Schneider, “The Third Dragkar Lama,” 53.
44. Gutschow, “The Smyung Gnas Fast in Zangskar,” 164.
45. dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, *sha chang bkag pa’i lung ‘dren rnams*, 6:665 (Kaie Mochizuki, “On the Scriptures Introducing the Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol by Dol Po Pa,” 41).

    > *theg pa chen po gsang sngags su gnang ba ma yin nam*

5. A Necessary Evil

1. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Non-Vegetarian Food,” 57.
2. Seventeenth Karmapa, in private discussion with the author, January 2012; Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, “The Rise of Vegetarianism in Tibet” (public talk at the Trace Foundation, April 11, 2015).

3. Jones, *Tibetan Nomads*, 55.
4. "Nomadism" is, in fact, something of a misnomer in the Tibetan context, as few, if any Tibetans simply followed their herds wherever they went. "Nomad," however, has become the accepted term to refer to Tibetans who dwell in tents while moving their herds from one pasture to another. For the sake of simplicity, I will follow this convention.
5. Jones, *Tibetan Nomads*, 56.
6. Bauer, *High Frontiers*, 56.
7. The Tibetan term *yak* (*g.yag*) technically refers to only the male of the species. Females are known as *dri* (*'bri*), and animals crossbred with cattle are called *dzo* (*mdzo*) if male and *dzomo* (*mdzo mo*) if female. Most nonspecialist works in English, however, use the term "yak" to refer to all of these animals, male, female, and crossbred. For the sake of consistency with these works and overall simplicity, I will do likewise.
8. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 82.
9. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 91.
10. Bauer, *High Frontiers*, 22.
11. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 97.
12. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 75.
13. Combe, *A Tibetan on Tibet*, 105.
14. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 48.
15. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 99.
16. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 101.
17. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 107.
18. Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet*, 5.
19. Bell, *The People of Tibet*, 223.
20. Combe, *A Tibetan on Tibet*, 124.
21. Khentrul Rinpoché, "Vegetarianism—Free from the Two Extremes."
22. Bellezza, *Dawn of Tibet*, 58.
23. Laurent, "The Tibetans in the Making," 73–108.
24. Tsering Shakya, "Whither the Tsampa Eaters?"
25. Kapstein, "Concluding Reflections," 140.
26. Tashi Khedrup, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, 12.
27. Tashi Khedrup, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, 73.
28. Bell, *The People of Tibet*, 217.
29. Tashi Khedrup, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, 15.
30. Naktsang Nulo, *My Tibetan Childhood*, 44–45.
31. padma dbang 'dus, *gter bdag gling pas rab byung bcu gnyis pa'i sa sbrul lor mdzad pa'i smin gling 'dus sde'i bca' yig ma bu*, 284.

    > *'dir mtha' gcig tu dkar rdor gyi sgrigs ma bcas kyang ston mo sogs dkar gro shas cher bya shing longs spyod kyi gzhi sha la mi byed par ci nas gal che /*

32. Jansen, "Selection at the Gate," 140.
33. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:598 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 113).

> *dgon pa'i las byed pa mang po zhig gis gtong sgo chen po yod ces 'brog nas lug nyi shu sum cu nyos nas ston kha gsod pa dgon pa che chung mang po na yod pa mngon sum du snang /*

34. Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery*, 87.
35. Tashi Khedrup, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, 35.
36. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 99; Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 102.
37. For one extensive example of this argument, see shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:151.
38. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 194.
39. van Vleet, "Medicine, Monasteries and Empire."
40. Kilty, "Introduction," 17.
41. Kilty, "Introduction," 17.
42. Translating the title of this text into English is somewhat difficult, as they are not, technically speaking, tantras. Janet Gyatso, therefore, translates it as *Four Treatises*. Most others however, use *Four Tantras*, and I have decided to follow suit, less out of concern for proper translation than simply to follow what has become customary.
43. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 151. On Yutok Yönten Gönpo's dates, see Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World,* 425, note 138.
44. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 83; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 67.

    > *khyi yi lce yis rma rnams 'drab / bong bu'i lce yis rus 'dzer 'gogs /*

45. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 62; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 65.

    > *skam sa'i sha rnams bsil zhing yang la rtsub / rlung dang bad kan ldan pa'i tsha ba sel / rlan gnas sha rnams snum zhing lci la dro / pho ba mkhal rken grang rlung nad la phan /*

46. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 62; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 65.

    > *lug sha snum dro stobs 'phel lus zungs skyed / rlung dang bad kan sel zhing dang ga 'byed /*

47. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 63; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 65.

    > *g.yag sha snum dro grang sel khrag mkhris skyed /*

48. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 638; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 20.

    > *brta bya byis pa rgas dang skyid par 'dug / snum 'dris me drod chung dang skom dad che / / stabs chung sos dus sha khu yos thug 'bras / / sbrang dang bu ram zhun mar sbyar te btang / / 'ju sla dang ga mi 'gag stobs skyed mchog /*

49. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 19.
50. *so sor thar pa'i mdo*, 5:13a (Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, 81).
51. In order to preserve his privacy, I use Tenzin's first name only.
52. shes rab 'byung gnas, *'jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam par thar pa rdo rje rin po che 'bar ba*, 176.

    mgul glo la phan zer bas byang g.yag gi glo ba skam po brdungs pa'i phye ma skyo tshar gtong bar zhus pas kyang ma gnang ste

53. se ra mkha' 'gro kun bzang bde skyong dbang mo, *dbus mo bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa nges 'byung 'dren pa'i shing rta skal ldan dad pa'i mchod sdong*, 1:356; cf. Jacoby, *Love and Liberation*, 63.

    nad kyi phyir du dgongs pa yin pa sogs kyis zas de la cung zad re longs spyod /

54. Ricard, *Writings of Shabkar*, 21–22.
55. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:609 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 121).

    nad pa zungs zad 'chi la nye ba sha zhig ma zos na mi 'tsho bar thag chod pa'i dus dang /

56. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:610 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 121).

    sku tshe yun ring 'tsho na bstan 'gro'i don rlabs chen 'ong ba'i bla ma skyes chen 'ga' res sku na bgres dus rlung bcos 'dra byed dgos pa'i dus dang /

57. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:585 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 103).
58. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:585 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 103).

    rang gis za pas mi chog gzhan la yang chos bshad dang kha brda 'dra gi shor la bshad pa rnams kyi kha zas 'dre khrid pa dang khyad par med

59. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 62; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 65.

    lug sha snum dro stobs 'phel lus zungs skyed / rlung dang bad kan sel zhing dang ga 'byed /

60. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, 63; cf. Schuetze, "From Zootherapy to 'Ahimsa' Medicine," 65.

    g.yag sha snum dro grang sel khrag mkhris skyed /

61. mus chen dkon mchog rgyal mtshan, *snyigs dus kyi rdo rje 'chang chen po chos kyi rje kun dga' bzang po'i rnam thar mdo bsdus pa*, 1:234b.

    gdan gcig rdor dkar bsten te rang tshugs dam par mdzad pas sku lus shin tu nyam chung

62. gung ru shes rab bzang po, *rje btsun sems dpa' chen po dkon mchog rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa gsung sgros ma*, 27:228; cf. Heimbel, "Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)," 325.
63. A human birth is said to be rare and the only opportunity to fully practice the Buddha's teachings.
64. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:153.

    > *'on kyang dal 'byor mi lus 'di ni rnyed dka' zhing sangs rgyas sgrub pa'i rten khyad par can yin pas na / 'di yun ring 'tsho ba'i ched du sha la sogs pa'i zas kyis gso nas 'di'i steng du gtan gyi 'dun ma len dgos phyir / 'di mi gso bar lus kyi stobs zhan nas dge ba sgrub mi nus pa dang rlung nad lta bus srog la nyan bzhin du /*

65. gnas gsar bkra shis chos 'phel, *rje kun gzigs 'jam mgon ngag gi dbang phyug yon tan rgya mtsho'i zhabs kyi 'das rjes kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i snang ba*, 95:515 (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Autobiography of Jamgon Kongtrul*, 378).

    > *de'i tshe bdag ni sha za mi dgos pa zhig tu skye ba'i smon lam byed pa yin ces yang yang bka' stsal pa'ang thos mod /*

66. o rgyan chos skyid, *mkha' 'gro ma o rgyan chos skyid kyi rnam thar*, 8–9 (Schaeffer, *Himalayan Hermitess*, 138).

    > *ma zho bu yi kha nas phrog dus su / sems nyid skyod ba'i ngang nas zho dgos byung / mi yi lus la brten nas zho dgos byung / ras zhos lces la zhim kyang sdig pa'i zas / ras spags gdan la byas kyang sdig pa'i gdan / rabs char gyabs la gyon kyang sdig pa'i dgos / ra dmar zas la cud kyang sdig pa'i dmar / ra sha kha ru 'jug dus sems nyid skyo / mi yi lugs la rten nas zas dgos byung /*

67. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:609 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 121).
68. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:153.

    > *'di mi gso bar lus kyi stobs zhan nas dge ba sgrub mi nus pa dang rlung nad lta bus srog la nyan bzhin du / de la phan pa'i thabs mi bsten pa lus bor ba byed pa ni / lha khang ka ba bzhi bshig pa dang nyes pa mtshungs pa*

69. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:612 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 123).

    > *gal te rlung shas che ba sogs kyi mis dgos pa'i dbang gis sha spong ma thub par za dgos pa byung na/ sha'i nyes dmigs dran par byas la sha la sred pa skyes pa spangs te /*

6. A Positive Good

1. Hilton's novel is the most famous of this genre, but it was not the first. European and American authors have been setting their novels in the "mysterious

land of Tibet" at least as far back as the mid-nineteenth century (Hilton, *Lost Horizon*).

2. For a detailed look at the impact of the Shangri-La ideal on contemporary Tibetans in exile, see Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*; and McGranahan, *Arrested Histories*.
3. For an excellent study of a nineteenth-century war, see Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpo Namgyel in Kham*.
4. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 81–139.
5. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 139.
6. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 352–359.
7. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 352.
8. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 359.
9. 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer, *lugs gnyis kyi bslab bya me tog 'spreng bdzes*, 1 (Jigme Thrilne Özer, "Beautiful Garland of Flowers: Advice on the Two Ethics," 98).

   stobs chen mi dang 'grogs na bsam don 'grub

10. 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer, *lugs gnyis kyi bslab bya me tog 'spreng bdzes*, 4 (Jigme Thrinle Özer, "Beautiful Garland of Flowers: Advice on the Two Ethics," 98).

    go bzang khyim du ma gzab khrom la gyon

11. Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World*, 355.
12. Jones, *Tibetan Nomads*, 57.
13. Bellezza, *Dawn of Tibet*, 57.
14. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 92.
15. Bauer, *High Frontiers*, 29.
16. Harris, "Yak Tails, Santa Claus, and Transnational Trade in the Himalayas."
17. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 117–123.
18. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 25.
19. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 51.
20. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 67–68.
21. Bell, *The People of Tibet*, 217.
22. Combe, *A Tibetan on Tibet*, 112.
23. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:150.

    sems can g.yag de nor khyur

24. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 97.
25. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 46.
26. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 25.
27. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:157 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 103).

    srin mo gdong dmar ma

28. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:157 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 103).

> *bud med rnams kyang gzhan dang gnyen sbrel nas rin brdzangs dang skyel bsu sogs kyi dus su bshas lug grangs med pa gsod / de bzhin du gnyen dang nye ba rnams kyis bos 'ongs skabs kyang kha zas gzhan byin na yid khar mi / 'gro ba ltar byed cing/ khram ma des 'gram pa 'gul mi shes pa ltar za yang /*

29. Naktsang Nulo, *My Tibetan Childhood*, 28.
30. *so sor thar pa'i mdo*, 5:13a (Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, 81).
31. mi bskyod rdo rje, *'dul ba mdo rtsa ba'i rgya cher 'grel spyi'i don mtha' dpyad dang bsdus don sa bcad dang 'bru yi don mthar chags su gnyer ba bcas 'dzam bu'i gling gsal bar byed*, 8:258.

> *da ni zas bsod pa slong ba'i ltung byed 'chad do / / bsod pa gang zhe na / 'o ma dang zho dang mar dang nya sha dang sha dang sha skam lta bu ni zas bsod pa yin no / / bsod pa de ni ltung ba 'di bskyed pa'i byed pa po'o /*

32. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 102; Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 46.
33. The same term is used by Charlene Makley in *The Violence of Liberation* (236–243). While my usage of this term largely overlaps with Makley's, there are some important differences, in particular Makley's inclusion of success in the monastery as an alternate form of "heroic masculinity." While I include this as an alternate form of masculinity, I would not include it within the "heroic" framework I discuss here.
34. Bellezza, *Dawn of Tibet*, 68.
35. Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet*, 32.
36. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 3*, 119–123.
37. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 3*, 120.
38. Bellezza, *Dawn of Tibet*, 183.
39. Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpo Namgyel in Kham*, 19.
40. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 1:481a (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 542).

> *mi mang po gsod pa'i sde 'khrug chen po bcwo brgyad kyi dmyal ba'i bang kha gtan pa sogs /*

41. Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpo Namgyel in Kham*, 99.
42. Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpo Namgyel in Kham*, 20.
43. Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet, Volume 3*, 120.
44. Samuel, "Gesar Epic of East Tibet," 358.
45. Samuel, "Gesar Epic of East Tibet," 360.
46. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 127.
47. Huber, "The Changing Role of Hunting," 205.
48. Makley, *The Violence of Liberation*, 241.
49. See, for instance, West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," 125–151; Butler, *Gender Trouble*.
50. Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*, 88.
51. FitzHerbert, "On the Tibetan Ge-Sar Epic in the Late 18th Century," 4.
52. Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 40.

53. Bellezza, "Gods, Hunting and Society," 347–396.
54. Dotson, "The Princess and the Yak," 61–85.
55. Dotson, "The Princess and the Yak," 78.
The old Tibetan in this passage is difficult for me to understand, so I have quoted Dotson's translation.

> *bstan po khri 'dus srong / / sku chung nas gzhon gyis kyang / / phag rgod la bshan gyIs mdzad / / g.yag rgod sg[r]og du bcug / / stagI rna ba la bzung ba la stsogs pa'*

56. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 105–107.
57. Bellezza, *Dawn of Tibet*, 63.
58. 'jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba'i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma*, 9:208, 281, 393–395. For more on the practice of sealing hills against hunters, see Huber, "The Chase and the Dharma," 36–55.
59. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 127.
60. mi la ras pa, *rje btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar rgyas par phye ba mgur 'bum*, 127a–134a (Milarepa, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, 1:275–286).
61. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri dwags kyi gtam nges 'byung gi pho nya*, 4:753–765 (Jigme Lingpa, "The Story of the Hunted Deer," 7).
62. 'jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba'i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma*, 9:160.
63. Huber, "Changing Role of Hunting," 210–211.
64. Paul, *The Tibetan Symbolic World*, 275–277.
65. Huber, "Chase and the Dharma," 36.
66. See Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 179–197; Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 395–399. For more on the phenomenon of "holy madmen" in Tibet, see DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*.
67. mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, *mdo mkhyen brste ye she rdo rje'i rnam thar*, 6 (Kornman, "A Tribal History," 85).

> *khyod kyis pho ma byas song*

68. mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, *mdo mkhyen brste ye she rdo rje'i rnam thar*, 7 (Kornman, "A Tribal History," 86).

> *'on kyang sang nang par snying stobs bskyed ma nus na / nged kyi bya thabs bral ba*

69. mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, *mdo mkhyen brste ye she rdo rje'i rnam thar*, 3–7 (Kornman, "A Tribal History," 84–86).
70. Tashi Khedrup, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, 53.
71. Huber, "Changing Role of Hunting," 196.
72. Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet*, 105.
73. Fiddes, *Meat: A Natural Symbol*, 65. cf. Gross, *The Question of the Animal and Religion*, 197.

74. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:609 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 121).

    nad pa zungs zad 'chi la nye ba

75. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:153.

    'di mi gso bar lus kyi stobs zhan

76. zla ba sgrol ma, "Silence in the Valley of Songs," 37–38.
77. 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang 'phyugs, *gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i khog phub kyi rnam bshad las / gdams ngag byung tshul gyi zin bris gsang chen bstan pa rgyas byed ces bya ba kha'u brag rdzong pa'i bzhed pa ma nor ba ban rgan mkhyen brtse'i nyams len*, 14:46a–48b (Stearns, trans., *Taking the Result as the Path*, 199–202).
78. Robin Kornman, Sangye Khandro, and Lama Chönam, trans., *The Epic of Gesar of Ling*, 136. This is Kornman et al.'s translation, as I do not have access to the Tibetan for this version of the Gesar epic.
79. Among several similar studies, see Ruby and Heine, "Meat, Morals, and Masculinity," 447–450.
80. Sobal, "Men, Meat, and Marriage," 135
81. Roy, "Meat-Eating, Masculinity, and Renunciation in India," 65–66.
82. Shahar, *The Shaolin Monastery*, 45–47.
83. Shahar, *The Shaolin Monastery*, 45–47.
84. Ch: 魯智深.
85. Ch: 水滸傳.
86. Lu Zhishen kills a young man who is assaulting a woman, but is unjustly pursued by the young man's father, a local magistrate. Even the magistrate, however, is unable to punish someone who has become a monk.
87. Shahar, *Shaolin Monastery*, 50.
88. Roy, "Meat-Eating, Masculinity, and Renunciation in India," 76–77.
89. Petitt, "Cowboy Masculinities," 67.
90. Petitt, "Cowboy Masculinities," 80.
91. Makley, *Violence of Liberation*, 225–284.
92. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism*, 15.
93. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 433b (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 493).

    chos dang 'jig rten gyi gtam bshad nas bsgrigs pa

94. Such feuds continue today, and it is not unusual to hear of young men killed or injured in feud-related violence.
95. It's worth noting that not all Tibetans were comfortable with Gesar's religious identification. Sumpa Khenpo, for instance, explicitly claims that Gesar was not an incarnation or emanation. See FitzHerbert, "On the Tibetan Ge-sar Epic," 7.
96. Goldstein and Beall, *Nomads of Western Tibet*, 98.

97. *Maṇi* is often used as a shorthand way to refer to *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*, the famous six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion.
98. Naktsang Nulo, *My Tibetan Childhood*, 89.
99. See, for instance, zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:587–591 (Shabkar, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 106–110).
100. bdud 'joms gling pa, *gter chen chos kyi rgyal po khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam par thar pa zhal gsungs ma*, 19:190 (Traktung Dudjom Lingpa, *A Clear Mirror*, 142).

    gzhan gis 'gran zla dang bral ba yin / mig long zhig khas zhan du song nas shi /

101. bdud 'joms gling pa, *gter chen chos kyi rgyal po khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam par thar pa zhal gsungs ma*, 19:190 (Traktung Dudjom Lingpa, *A Clear Mirror*, 142).

    gzhan gis 'gran zla dang bral ba yin /

102. Tashi Khedrup, *Adventures of a Tibetan Fighting Monk*, 50.
103. Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery*, 94.
104. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, 216–217.
105. Huber, "Changing Role of Hunting," 208.
106. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:585 (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 103).
107. Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism," 114–117.
108. There are a handful of autobiographies written by Tibetan women in the precommunist era, but they are vastly outnumbered by those written by men.
109. Jacoby, *Love and Liberation*, 1.

7. Seeking a Middle Way

1. Karmapa 17 Orgyen Tinle Dorje, "Talk on Not Eating Meat."
2. bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, *gong sa skyabs mgon chen po mchog gis khor yug srung skyob skor stsal ba'i blang dor lam ston*, 131 (His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, *His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama on Environment*, 93).
3. The Dalai Lama has sometimes been said to eat meat only every other day (Phelps, *The Great Compassion*, 156). The Dalai Lama himself, however, reports only that he tries to reduce his meat consumption by eating vegetarian "most of the time" (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, "Non-Vegetarian Food," 7, 58).
4. tshul khrims blo gros, *dge bskul zhu yig in sha chang tha ma kha sogs kyi nyes dmigs phyogs bsdus bzhugs so*, 196 (Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, "Words to Increase Virtue").
5. padma nyin byed dbang po, *zin bris kyi rim pa sna tshogs pa'i skor rnams phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa yon tan bdud rtsi'i gter mdzod*, 3:235.

    zhag bdun sha chang spangs zhing / gza' skar 'phrod sbyor dge bar rdo rje rnam 'joms kyi khrus zhu shing / sems can gyi srog bslu tshe thar nges shig byas te dge pa'i 'dun pa bzang po'i mtshams sbyor dang bcas rang gzhan gyi mgul du 'chang

6. ‘gro ‘dul gter bdag gling pa, *gter bdag gling pas rab byung bcu gnyis pa’i sa sbrul (1689) lor mdzad pa’i smin gling ‘dus sde’i bca’ yig ma bu*, 284.

   > *‘dir mtha’ gcig tu dkar rdor gyi sgrigs ma bcas kyang ston mo sogs dkar gro shas cher bya shing longs spyod kyi gzhi sha la mi byed par ci nas gal che /*

7. Dilgo Khyentse, *Brilliant Moon*, 80.
8. For more on the use of astrology in governing daily life, see Tashi Rabgyas and Henry Osmaston, “The Tibetan Calendar and Astrology in the Regulation of Zangskari Agriculture,” 111–119.
9. 萨嘎达娃月我们尽量不要吃肉
10. karma pakshi, *karma pakshi rang rnam dang skyi lan ring mo*, 102–103. Karma Pakshi’s *Autobiography* mentions that meat was not eaten on “the four times of the eleventh month” (*zla ba bcu gcig dus bzhi*). The specifics of this reference are unclear to me, and in the paraphrase here I follow Karma Thinley’s interpretation (Karma Thinley, *History of the Sixteen Karmapas*, 50).
11. dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *mdo smad chos ‘byung*, 183.

    > *shing khyi lor sku ‘bum na lnga mchod dang lo gsar la sha ‘gyed gtong ba bcad*

12. ‘gos lo zhon nu dpal, *deb ther sngon po*, 794, 818 (Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, 677, 699).
13. Dilgo Khyentse, *Journey to Enlightenment*, 1:33.
14. ‘jigs med gling pa, *yul lho rgyud du byung ba’i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse’i ‘od zer gyi rnam thar pa legs byas yongs ‘du’i snye ma*, 9:125.

    > *sems can thams cad kyi rang gi ma byas / khong ‘jig rten pas de ltar ma rig ste gsod nus kyang / rang re chos pa tshos bza’ nus pa’i kha na mi ‘dug*

15. o rgyan gling pa, *padma bka’ thang*, 302 (Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 144).

    > *dge ‘dun skom du dkar dang ja gsol cig / zas su bru dang bur sgrang mar thud gsol / . . . chang nag sha dang lhad zas ma sten cig / zas su ci dgar longs spyod dug ma za /*

16. ngag dbang chos grags, *‘dul ba’i spyi don thub bstan rgyas pa’i nyin byed*, 2:553–554.

    > *sha ni sha’i ched du bsad pa yin pa’i mthong thos dogs gsum dang bral ba yin zhing / de la rnam gsum dag pa’i sha zer bas /*

17. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 328–330.
18. Shabkar’s argument here has already been discussed extensively in chapter 2. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi’i chu rgyun*, 12:601 (Shabkar Tsokdrug Rangrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 115).
19. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *bya btang tshogs drug rang grol gyis phyogs med ri khrod ‘grims pa’i tshe rang gzhan chos la bskul phyir glu dbyangs dga’ ston ‘gyed pa*, 4:37b.

> *gal te gcod par mi nus kyang / / mthong thos dogs gsum med pa yi / / rnam gsum dag pa'i sha zos na /*

20. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sdom gsum rnam par 'byed pa'i gzhung don gsal bar byed pa'i 'grel pa legs bshad 'phrul gyi lde mig*, 14:262.

> *ri rngad 'dra bas bza' bar gnad*

21. Childs, *Tibetan Diary*, 127.
22. dbra ston skal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *rje btsun bla ma dam pa nges pa don gyi gyung drung 'chad dbang dpal shar rdza pa chen po bkra shis rgyal mtsan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba thar 'dod khas pa'i mgul rgyan*, 1:122–123.
23. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:601 (Shabkar Tsokdrug Rangrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 115).

> *dge 'dun pas kyang bsad nas sha mang po yod shag byas nyos / gsod mkhan nyo mkhan gnyis ka'i rgyu rkyen la brten nas sems can ra lug brgya stong mang po'i srog mngon sum gcod pa 'di la nyes pa gang yang med / rnam gsum dag pa yin na thams cad dag pa rab 'byams 'ba' zhig tu song 'dug pas /*

24. shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan, *sha'i nyes dmigs mdor bsdus*, 15:155.

> *dus zas pa yi shi sha dang / tshang [sic: tshong] dus kha 'khor nyos sha ni*

25. Anonymous, *ye shes mkha' 'gro bsod nams dpal 'dren gyi sku skye gsum pa rje btsun ma chos kyi sgron ma'i rnam thar*, 5b (Diemberger, *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty*, 153).
26. See, for instance, zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *bya btang tshogs drug rang grol gyis phyogs med ri khrod 'grims pa'i tshe rang gzhan chos la bskul phyir glu dbyangs dga' ston 'gyed pa*, 4:19b.
27. mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan, *'dul bab mdor bsdus kyi 'grel pa*, 50.

> *'bri shing snum pa'i ro la chags pa la sogs kyi sgo nas za ba spang bar bya la / srog gso ba'i phyir du bza' ba ni / nad pa la sogs la gnang ba'o /*

28. karma chags med, *sha yi nyes dmigs dang gnang bkag gi sa mtshams dbye ba yul byang phyogs rgyud kyi paṇḍi ta 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung*, 35:456.

> *sems can thams cad pha ma gyur pa med pas pha ma'i sha yin pa dang / nye dur ma gyur pa med pas bu'i sha yin pa'i phyir*

29. mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzang, *sdom pa gsum gyi rnam par bzhag pa mdor bsdus*, 352.

> *thog ma med pa nas pha mar gyur pa'i sems can 'di dag la bu gcig pa dang 'dra bar blta bar bya ba yin pas bu'i sha dang mtshungs pa de dag sred pas za bar mi rung ngo*

30. dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *snying tig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, 7:323 (Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, 208).

> *sha'i ro la sred pas grong yul du bag med du zos na / dang / blang gi dam tshig bag med du spyad pa zhes bya ste / de yang 'gal /*

31. karma chags med, *sha ni snying rje can gyi bza' zhes pa'i don gyi man ngag mdo sngags bcud bsdus*, 35:478.

> *kye ma sha yi ched du shi bai sems can ni / / tshe rabs mang po'i ma rgan rnying re rje /*

32. 'jigs med gling pa, *mdo sngags zung du 'jug pa'i spyod yul lam khyer sangs rgyas lam zhugs*, 8:723 (Jigme Lingpa, "Entering into the Path of Enlightenment," 133).

> *snying rtsi shum shum ba dad sems can de la snying rje dbang med du mi skye ba'i thabs med /*

33. *Kaṃkani* is shorthand for the mantra of the Buddha Akṣobhya. I have been unable to identify the "crown torma" prayer. "Liberation upon wearing" refers to mantras and prayers that are said to grant liberation when they come in physical contact with one's body.
34. 'jigs med gling pa, *mdo sngags zung du 'jug pa'i spyod yul lam khyer sangs rgyas lam zhugs*, 8:723 (Jigme Lingpa, "Entering into the Path of Enlightenment," 133).

> *de kha'i shes pa ngar ma nyams pas kaM ka ni dang / gtsug tor ma'i gzungs / btags grol gyis yang snying sogs ci nus bzla / sha la phus 'debs / de la dmigs nas smon lam drag po gdab /*

35. karma chags med, *sha ni snying rje can gyi bza' zhes pa'i don gyi man ngag mdo sngags bcud bsdus*, 35:477–478.

> *dud 'gro de ngan song las thar pa*

36. Anonymous [likely Karmé Khenpo], *Prayer to Purify the Obscurations of Eating Specifically Slaughtered Meat Combined with the Seven Branches*, 7.

> *sha zos sdig sgrib byang zhing dag par shog /*

37. Anonymous [likely Karmé Khenpo], *Prayer to Purify the Obscurations of Eating Specifically Slaughtered Meat Combined with the Seven Branches*, 7–8.

> *bsad pa'i dud 'gro bde chen zhing du drongs / gsod pa'i shan pa srog len med pa dang /*

38. 'jigs med gling pa, *ri chos zhal gdams ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*, 8:705 (Jigme Lingpa, *A Wondrous Ocean of Advice for the Practice of Solitary Retreat*, 5).

> *de nas gung tshigs za ba'i tshe / sha la gzungs sngags khyad par can mang po btab / snying rje bskyed / smon lam btab*

39. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *legs bshad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*, 12:594 (Shabkar Tsokdrug Rangrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas*, 109).

> *bsad tshar zos tshar ba'i rjes kyi snying rje de dang / rgyags rtsed kyis 'don pa 'dra bton na skye bo'i mi nag pa tsho'i mig sngar mdzes kyang / bsam sbyor gang la bltas rung phan pa'i tshod na mi 'dug /*

40. Shorthand for *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*, the famous six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion.
41. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *bya btang tshogs drug rang grol gyis phyogs med ri khrod 'grims pa'i tshe rang gzhan chos la bskul phyir glu dbyangs dga' ston 'gyed pa*, 4:37b–38a.

> *sha 'di gcod thub ltos / / gal te gcod par mi nus kyang / / mthong thos dogs gsum med pa yi / / rnam gsum dag pa'i sha zos na / / nyes pa med pas za bar gyis / / za ba'i tshe na kaM ka ni / / la sogs gzungs sngags gang shes rigs / / bzlas nas sha la phus btab ste / / zos nas phan yon che ba yin / / sems can de la snying rje bsgoms / / zos nas ma Ni ci mang bzlas / / bsngo ba smon lam btab na legs / / de min bsam bzhin ston dus su*

42. karma chags med, *sha yi nyes dmigs dang gnang bkag gi sa mtshams dbye ba yul byang phyogs rgyud kyi paṇḍi ta 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung*, vol 35:475–476.

> *des na rab sha bcad dam par byas la . . . 'bring du bsngos sha spangs nas de ma yin pa'i sha za ba'i tshe tshogs nyung ngu byas la bza' 'o / / tha ma yang nyin sha dang sems can ris mthun pa'i sha mi sha sogs spangs . . . gzungs sngags dang sangs rgyas kyi mtshan gyis dud 'gro'i sgrib pa sbyang phyir snying rje chen po bskyed do /*

43. Doniger, *The Hindus*, 128.
44. Doniger, *The Hindus*, 197.
45. *'dul ba gzhi*, 3:25a–25b.
46. *myang 'das chen po'i mdo*, 52:57b.
47. For studies of vegetarianism in India, see Doniger, *The Hindus*; Chapple, *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*.
48. shes rab 'byung gnas, *'jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam par thar pa rdo rje rin po che 'bar ba*, 176.

> *byang g.yag gi glo ba skam po brdungs pa'i phye ma*

49. se ra mkha' 'gro kun bzang bde skyong dbang mo, *dbus mo bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa nges 'byung 'dren pa'i shing rta skal ldan dad pa'i mchod sdong*, 1:356; cf. Jacoby, *Love and Liberation*, 63.
50. o rgyan gling pa, *padma bka' thang*, 302 (Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 144).
51. zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol, *zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol gyi rnam thar rgyas pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po*, 1:29a (Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol, *The Life of Shabkar*, 34).

> *a me khyod kyi bya ba 'di'i btsog yang / gnyan rgyu'i tshe dbang ngag dbang gi shul chad pa 'dra/ khyod bu ma skyes /*

52. For more thorough discussions of the intersection of Buddhism and violence, see Yamamoto, *Vision and Violence*; Makley, *The Violence of Liberation*.

Epilogue: Contemporary Tibet

1. Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 23–53.
2. Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 158–159.
3. For an exhaustively detailed account of the 1950s, see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2*, and Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 3*.
4. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2*.
5. On the Democratic Reforms, see Goldstein, Jiao, and Tanzen Lhundrup, *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet*. On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet, see Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, 314–347.
6. For a detailed account of these disastrous policies, both religious and economic, see Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*.
7. Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, 367–394.
8. For more on the founding of Serta Larung and Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok himself, see Germano, "Re-Membering the Dis-Membered Body of Tibet," 53–94.
9. Gayley, "The Ethics of Cultural Survival," 435–502.
10. 'jigs med phun tshogs, *dus rabs nyer gcig pa'i gangs can pa rnams la phul ba'i snying gtam sprin gyi rol mo*, 4:131; cf. Gayley, "The Ethics of Cultural Survival," 435.

    > *nga tsho bod mi rigs kyi bsam blo'i dge mtshan dang / thun min gyi rig gzhung / yul srol goms gshis sogs pha mes kyi srol rgyun bzang bo rnams mi nub par rgyun 'dzin bya rgyu dang / deng rabs kyi rigs pa gsar ba 'phral phug gnyis kar phan pa'i cha rnams bdag gir byas te*

11. Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, 430–448.
12. For the most nuanced discussion of these self-immolations to date, see the April 2012 special issue of *Cultural Anthropology*, which includes twenty articles on this topic: McGranahan and Litzinger, eds., *Self-Immolation as Protest in Tibet*.
13. For a good description of disastrous farming policies implemented in Central Tibet, see Thubten Khétsun, *Memories of Life in Lhasa Under Chinese Rule*.
14. thub bstan phun tshogs. *thang bla tshe dbang gi rnam thar skor*, 8 (Barstow, "Skillful Memories").

    > *tshan rig 'gal ba'i zing las la / lo tog btab kyang 'bras ma smin / / mi ranms thang chad lus zung zad / / mu ge'i bskal pa yang bas / / skye 'gro mang po'i tshe srog bkum /*

15. I have been told by his direct disciple Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö that Khenpo Jigmé Püntsok's diabetes made vegetarianism impossible.
16. 'jigs med phun tshogs, *gangs can pho mo yongs kyi snyan lam du phul ba'i zhu yig*, 3:389–398.
17. For more on the way the use of such technology has affected Buddhism in contemporary Tibet, see Gayley, "The Ethics of Cultural Survival," 463–497.
18. For a detailed study of the anti-slaughter movement, see Gaerrang (Kabzung), "Alternative Development on the Tibetan Plateau."
19. tshul khrims blo gros, ed., *sha chang tha ma kha sogs kyi nyes dmigs phyogs bsdus bzhugs so*.

20. Travel and research in the Tibetan Autonomous Region was severely restricted following the protests in 2008, preventing me from performing firsthand fieldwork in the Central Tibetan region. This situation is obviously not ideal, and my discussion of contemporary vegetarianism in this region remains highly tentative.
21. ra sed dkon mchog rgya mtsho, *mi 'jigs skyabs kyi sbyin pa dkar zas ring lugs kyi phan yon bstan pa zhi bde'i lam bzang zhe bya ba'i bzhugs so.*
22. Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism," 113–114.
23. bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, *gong sa skyabs mgon chen po mchog gis khor yug srung skyob skor stsal ba'i blang dor lam ston* (His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, *His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama on Environment*).
24. Yeh, "Blazing Pelts and Burning Passions."
25. There are currently two claimants to the throne of the Karmapa, and I will refrain from weighing in on this controversy, except to note that almost everyone I spoke with in Tibet regard Ogyen Trinley Dorje to be the true Karmapa. Following their lead, when I speak of the Karmapa, I am referring to Ogyen Trinley Dorje.
26. Karmapa 17 Orgyen Tinle Dorje, "Talk on Not Eating Meat."
27. ra sed dkon mchog rgya mtsho, *mi 'jigs skyabs kyi sbyin pa dkar zas ring lugs kyi phan yon bstan pa zhi bde'i lam bzang zhe bya ba'i bzhugs so*, 10.

    > *'jig rten thog sems can su 'dra zhig yin rung rang gi srog la ma gces pa dang 'chi ba la mi 'tsher zhing mi skrag pa ni shin tu dkon la / 'gro ba thams cad srog dang bcas pa dang / bde sdug gi tshor ba yod pa gcig mtshungs yin pa'i phyir / rang ci 'dra ba gzhan kun kyang de 'dra yin stabs / der brten sangs rgyas kyi thugs brtse ba chen pos ni nye ring med par kun la snyoms pas mi zhes tshur mi gcod / dud 'gro zhes phar mi gcod par rtag tu 'dra mnyam gnang zhing / srog chags phra mo tshun chad srog dang bcas pa'i lus can kun la rang gi nyams la gzhigs nas gnod pa byed mi rung bar gdams te /*

28. ra sed dkon mchog rgya mtsho, *mi 'jigs skyabs kyi sbyin pa dkar zas ring lugs kyi phan yon bstan pa zhi bde'i lam bzang zhe bya ba'i bzhugs so*, 26.

    > *sha za mkhan yod pa'i rkyen gyis shan pas sems can gyi srog bcad pa yin /*

29. tshul khrims blo gros, *sha'i kha zas gnang bkag gi bslab bya blang dor gsal ba'i me long.*
30. Karmapa 17 Ogyen Trinley Dorje, personal interview with the author, January 31, 2012.
31. Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, personal interview with the author, April 23, 2015.
32. tshul khrims blo gros, *dge bskul zhu yig in sha chang tha ma kha sogs kyi nyes dmigs phyogs bsdus bzhugs so*, 197 (Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, "Words to Increase Virtue").

    > *ser skya su yin yang sha mi bza' ba'i dam bca' re byed e thub bstan rgyu shin tu gal che /*

33. tshul khrims blo gros, *dge bskul zhu yig in sha chang tha ma kha sogs kyi nyes dmigs phyogs bsdus bzhugs so*, 196 (Khenpo Tsültrim Lodrö, "Words to Increase Virtue").

> *yang khyim tshang rang gi sgo bshas bsha' rgyu 'di 'ang rab na gtan du'am gnas skabs su mtshams 'jog / de tsam ma byung rung nges par du je nyung du gtong rgyu dang / gal te cis kyang mi bsha' thabs med yin na'ang mchu sdom rgyu dang ske gcod rgyu lta bu'i ngan gsod tshabs po che de ni gtan nas byed mi rung ste /*

34. Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism," 117, 125.

    de min / rgya nag gi chos pa tsho dang pyi gling gi dkar zas ring lugs pa tsho la g.yam rgyug gis a / gsar 'ur 'drogs byed kyi yod /

    In addition to Jamyang Kyi's comments, several Western scholars have made similar suggestions to me in private conversation, though to the best of my knowledge none have published on this.
35. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.
36. *lus khams bde thang gyi rgyu*
37. ra sed dkon mchog rgya mtsho, *mi 'jigs skyabs kyi sbyin pa dkar zas ring lugs kyi phan yon bstan pa zhi bde'i lam bzang zhe bya ba'i bzhugs so*, 29.

    > *mdor na sha zos pas lus la nad mang du skyed cing rgyud dmu rgod du 'gro ba dang /*
38. Wind, bile, and phlegm. The role of the three humors in Tibetan medicine has been discussed extensively in chapter 5 of this book.
39. See, for instance, Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism."
40. For an entertaining account of contemporary Chinese business culture, see Osburg, *Anxious Wealth*.
41. Gayley, "The Ethics of Cultural Survival."
42. Kolås and Thowsen, *On the Margins of Tibet*, 153.
43. Kolås and Thowsen, *On the Margins of Tibet*, 153.
44. Kolås and Thowsen, *On the Margins of Tibet*, 153.
45. Hartley, " 'Inventing Modernity' in Amdo," 1.
46. Gaerrang (Kabzung), "Alternative Development on the Tibetan Plateau."
47. Gaerrang (Kabzung), "Alternative Development on the Tibetan Plateau," 291–292.
48. Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism." 121.
49. Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism." 121.
50. For more on this movement, see Gaerrang (Kabzung), "Alternative Development on the Tibetan Plateau," 81–92; Bauer and Huatse Gyal, eds. "Resettlement Among Tibetan Nomads in China."
51. Buffetrille, "A Controversy on Vegetarianism," 171.

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