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# COMPASSIONATE FRIEND



Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty - India  
An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights

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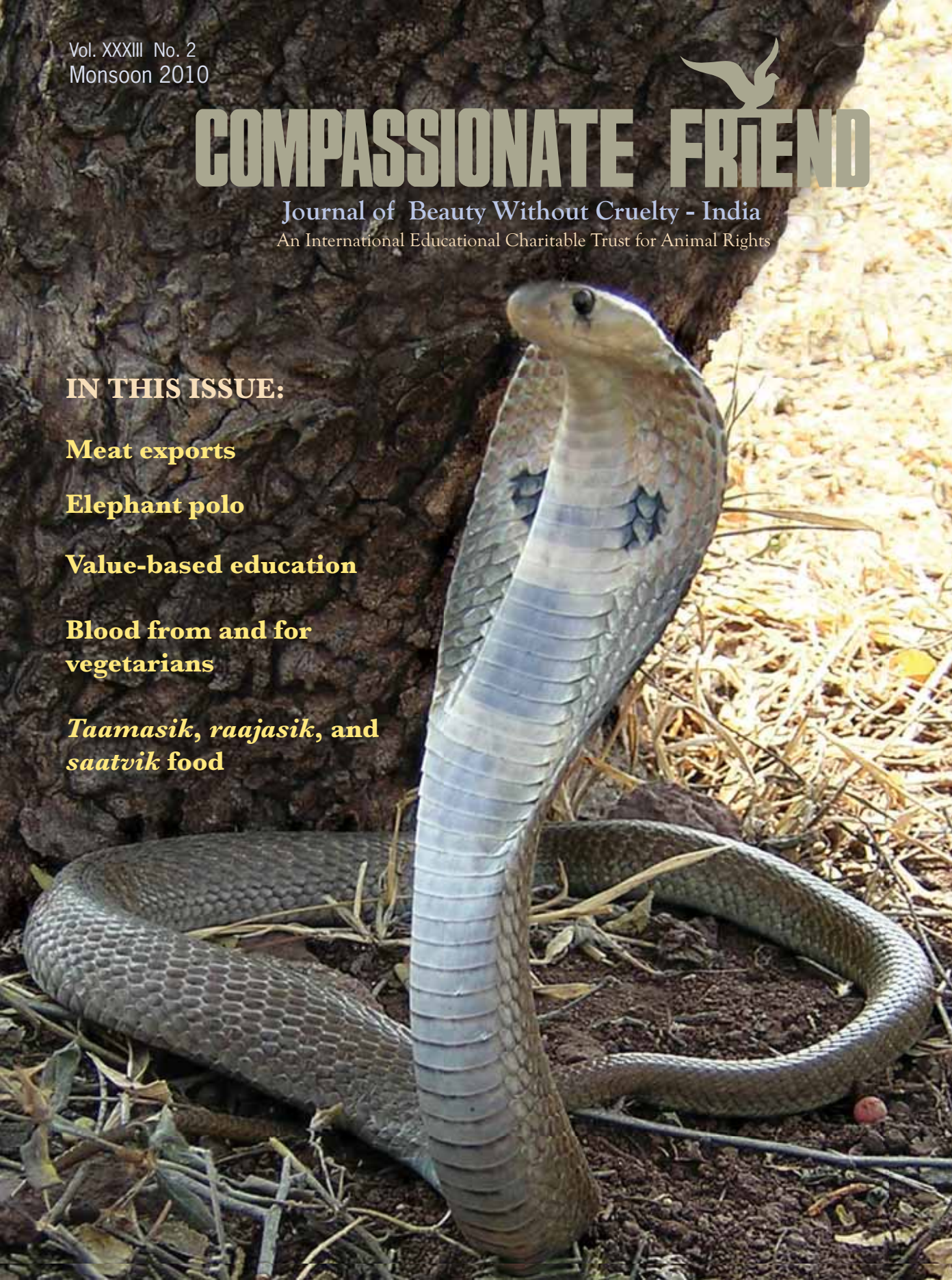
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## Editorial Meat feat



Courtesy: Ashoke

**M**ost countries' actions are decided on by groups of aggressive men and women who are in a position to get their way, so parts of a nation's history and heritage are often found irrelevant to its current actions.

In the 20th and 21st centuries we find an example in the national conduct of Israel. Jews suffered during World War II, but are neo-Nazis in their attitude to Palestinians today. Anyone who has seen "Braveheart" knows that Scots suffered at the hands of the English. That did not prevent them from joining their former oppressors in oppressing their colonies when the opportunity presented itself. A third example of the incongruity between a nation's past and present actions is that of the U.S.A., which did not consider the election of a socialist government in France sound enough reason



Prabal Ghosh, secretary, Canadian Institute of Food Science & Technology, presents research and technology cooperation opportunities between Canada and India in the agri-food sector, at the CIFST's Annual General Meeting at Winnipeg April 30 2010. He said food processing was a priority sector in India as well as Canada; India has a huge pool of scientific and research personnel, and is the second-fastest-growing Asian market. He did not say that unfortunately such cooperation means suffering and death for the animals involved in some industries, which is contrary to the heritage of India. *Photo courtesy: A. Dasgupta.*

for military intervention in French affairs. Yet it invaded and carpet-bombed Vietnam the same decade in a (failed) bid to keep it from going communist.

these activities. The *Rig Veda Samhita* says, "One who partakes of human flesh, the flesh of a horse or of another animal, and deprives others of

Coming to India, we find *ahinsa* an important facet of our heritage

and culture since Vedic times. *Ahinsa*, meaning to do no harm to living creatures and to avoid violence, is an ancient Indian religious tenet in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. It is connected to the idea that violence entails negative karmic consequences. Though ritual sacrifice of animals and meat-eating are condoned in the earliest Vedic texts, other texts present counter-arguments against

**Meat exports are currently around 5,00,000 tonnes annually, but the potential is greater.**

milk by slaughtering cows, O King, if such a fiend does not desist by other means, then you should not hesitate to punish such a person."

The U.S. historian Will Durant said: "India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages: she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through

the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all."

For all that, India is climbing the totem pole of global meat-exporting countries. Frozen meat and meat products exports crossed Rs 6,000 crores in 2009-10, up 82 percent in three years. Apparently this "progress" is due to better cattle health and a rising international demand for beef.

Some experts opine that India may become one of the biggest frozen meat suppliers as almost 13 percent of the world's cattle, 50 percent of its buffaloes and 15 percent of its goats live here. Meat exports are currently around 5,00,000 tonnes annually, but the potential is greater. In Egypt, for example, the market for frozen meat used to be dominated by Brazil but, in the last few years, Indian meat has replaced Brazilian. Vietnam, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian nations are also potential global contenders.

The only things holding India back are stringent safety norms, adequate cold storage and warehousing facilities — and, perhaps, its once-glorious cultural heritage.





## Elephant polo: conservation activity or animal abuse?

By Shubhbroto Ghosh

Are animals meant to entertain rich folks as they guzzle champagne and caviar? That appears to be the motive behind the organization of elephant polo games. Though a form of elephant polo was first played in India at the beginning of the 20th century, the modern form of the game originated in Meghauli, Nepal — reportedly after a drinking bout. Nepal's "Tiger Tops" resort remains the headquarters of elephant polo's merry men, and the site of the "World Elephant Polo Championships."

Elephants are gregarious creatures that walk miles every day in search of food and opportunities to socialise with their own kind in their natural habitat. The (illegal) process of capturing these sensitive, gentle creatures is a brutal and cruel one, documented by several videos and films. Calves are separated from their families and beaten mercilessly till their spirits are broken and they accede to their captors' demands. Many animals, adult and young, die in this process. Starvation and the use of red-hot iron rods to tame the unfortunate creatures are but a part of this induction.

Some sections of society deem it acceptable to use these giants for their entertainment

by reducing them to pathetic shadows of their former regal selves. Elephant polo is currently played principally in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal.

The game is sought out in Rajasthan because foreign tourists patronise it. This sport has been going on there for more than 30 years, climaxing on November 18 2006, when a high-profile elephant polo match was organised in Jaipur.

Rajasthan is not a natural elephant-range state. Some of its captive elephants are the descendants of those used by its royal families decades ago. Temperatures are usually too high in Rajasthan to be conducive to elephant welfare.

### The game is sought out in Rajasthan because foreign tourists patronise it.

The animals have been reported to suffer from tuberculosis, opacity of the eyes, gaping wounds on the body, massive foot problems and a host of other diseases that make their lives miserable. They are also used to transport tourists at Amber Fort in the scorching sun, and are treated badly by their handlers. Handlers use *ankushes*, or metal prods, to exert control and dominance over them.

There is a consensus among international elephant specialists and wildlife experts about the pointlessness of making these hapless creatures play a game intended for human benefit. Some organisers of elephant polo matches seek

to use attendance fees to bolster, and raise awareness of, conservation efforts — but there is no evidence that wild animals performing frivolous tricks sensitises the masses to conservation efforts. To make matters worse, several of the elephants used in Jaipur's polo matches are without valid certificates, or with forged certificates. The animals have probably been illegally procured from Assam and traded in violation of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, which lists elephants as a Schedule I species to be accorded the highest level of protection in the country.

Regardless of whether the elephants used in polo matches are treated humanely or not, elephant experts have argued that these animals are

being unnecessarily dragged into a spectacle that should not be organized at all. One of the world's leading wildlife rehabilitators, who has hand-reared more than 75 baby African elephants, describes this game as insensitive and cruel. Another expert who has studied African Elephants several decades in Amboseli National Park, Kenya, has also expressed her opposition to the sport.

Criticism has poured in from luminaries in the animal rights, animal welfare and conservation fields. Virginia McKenna, a former president of Beauty Without Cruelty International and an eloquent elephant welfare campaigner for at least 25 years, has repeatedly appealed to the

organisers of this sport to stop it in India and neighbouring countries.

Many Indian groups and activists have expressed their opposition too. A website has been developed at [www.stopelephantpolo.com](http://www.stopelephantpolo.com) to raise societal awareness of the futility of using wild animals in this game, no matter what the intention.


The elephant polo issue has been the centre of debate on the electronic list of the Hong Kong-based Asian Animal Protection Network. While the game's supporters claim this

activity is not of significant welfare or conservation concern, its opponents have stated that the game is inherently cruel and counterproductive, especially if conducted in the name of conservation; it fuels the illegal trade in this endangered species. The elephants of Rajasthan deserve better than to be treated as mere curios in a state that has much to offer in the form of cultural and historical heritage and pageantry.

The sensitive nature of elephants is not a figment of the imagination of so-called "bunny huggers" and animal rights

activists. Decades of research by leading elephant experts have established that elephants are capable of experiencing the same emotions as humans. In the light of all that has been written here, and in the website mentioned, it is suggested this activity be examined to prevent unnecessary abuse of the wonderful, amazing pachyderms whose real abode is the verdant greenery of the jungles.



 *Shubhobroto Ghosh is a BWC member. The views expressed in this article are his own, conveyed as an individual.*

### Elephant Suffering

The Animal Welfare Board of India, Help In Suffering of Jaipur, and Elephant Family of the U.K. did not give a thought to the basic exploitation of elephants. Instead, they organised a Cartier-sponsored elephant polo event at Jaipur. Although the use of the *ankush* was forbidden, the event drew considerable flak from many international animal rights and wildlife groups.



Snehal Bhatt of the Gujarat SPCA says the pictures taken by them in Nepal (below), where baby elephants were beaten so badly were especially disturbing: "They show how the polo sticks whack the elephants' trunks when they miss the ball. The trunk is very sensitive, and supposed to be animal's nose. They screamed in pain. At Jaipur, I and other activists were detained and no one was allowed inside. My husband had to take pictures from outside the grounds, so some of the photos (above) were blurred." *Photos courtesy: Rajesh Bhavsar, GSPCA*



## Lost values

By Amruta Ubale

In days gone by, one of the most important duties of teachers was to instill values in their students. Values play an important role in distinguishing right from wrong.



Such teachings were rooted in our rich Indian culture and tradition of non-violence. *Gurus* inspired their *shishyas* to be compassionate and respect all forms of life, but these values seem lost on the horizons of our memories today.

The current educational system has deviated from this path. Values are taking a back seat, the prime focus being on subject knowledge. Materialistic goals are offered as the motivators driving the youth of today. Because of these preoccupations, students have no time for, and do not feel the need for, learning values.

To make matters worse, schools organize co-curricular activities such as visits to circuses or zoos, and dissection. These alienate students further from our ancient heritage. The school environment has become so competitive that students get severely depressed if unable to top their classes. Some commit suicide on failing examinations.

### Reverence for life the most important value

Psychologists have discovered a link between cruelty to animals in childhood and criminal behavior in adults. Several studies conducted on criminals point out that cruelty towards animals during childhood is an early sign of criminal behavior. Most criminals who have been violent toward people share a common history of cruelty to animals in their childhood.

One of the Fundamental Duties under Part IVA 51A(g) of The Constitution of India states, "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India – to

protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures".

Global warming is an earth-shaking reality. Many species have become extinct, and many more are vulnerable due to climatic change. Species have lost their ability to evolve fast enough to prevent their extinction. The farm animal sector is a major contributor to global warming. Activities taking place in or for slaughterhouses, such as grain production for animal feed, waste storage and disposal, water use, and energy expenditures on farms, as well as transporting feed and finished animal products, lead to major environmental problems triggering climate change.

Compassion and kindness towards animals was taught to Indian children from ancient times. For ages philosophers, political leaders, sages, gurus and scholars have expressed the importance of, and need for, compassion and reverence for all forms of life, as indicated by the following quotations:

"Kindness to animals is the highest religion" — **Lord Krishna**

"Whoever is kind to the creatures of God is kind to himself." — **The Prophet Mohammed**

"The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." — **King James Bible**

"The highest religion is to rise to universal brotherhood; and



to consider all creatures your equals.” — **Guru Nanak**

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” — **Mahatma Gandhi**

### **The solution: value-based education**

Young children have proved to have inborn compassion, though they lose this aspect of their nature in time. Parents and teachers consider compassion unimportant and do not find a need to reinforce it. A child cannot develop into a harmonious personality with high values unless the basic value of reverence for life is inculcated through value-based education, which entails:

- Thoughts (a mind that knows) — bringing out positive attitudes in children like that of kindness and respect for all living beings.

- Concerns (a heart that feels) — assisting children to clarify doubts and develop consciences based on fair play, justice and compassion for things ethically, morally and socially right, as well as to develop a strong civic sense.

- Deeds (actions that speak) — providing children the needed support to uphold these principles at all times and places.

Co-curricular activities need to be designed to promote the values of compassion and

reverence for life:

Humane alternatives like computer programs need to be used in place of dissection.

Plays, skits and debates which portray the lives and importance of animals need to be encouraged.

Viewing films on nature and wildlife helps students appreciate our ancient natural heritage.

The natural habitats of animals can be visited by students instead of zoos or circuses.

Helping in civic and social causes reinforces students' values and puts them into practice.

Keeping pets like cats and dogs can be encouraged as it helps them understand animals, bond with and respect them.

### **A child cannot develop into a harmonious personality with high values unless the basic value of reverence for life is inculcated through value-based education.**

Kindness clubs need to be formed as they make students aware of animal exploitation and ways to alleviate suffering.

The teacher plays a pivotal role in the education system. In addition to imparting knowledge and developing their student's skills, one of the most important duties of a teacher is to instill values among students. Only if teachers know, and live by, high values themselves can they be in a position to



Student sharing values learnt from a BWC awareness program conducted by the writer, who is standing at the right. *Photo courtesy: Khurshid Bhathena*

create environments conducive to generating and sustaining values in their students. A concise course in value-based education (covering ethical, moral and civic values) would help teachers impart value-based education to their students.

The media has a profound influence on the minds of children as well as adults. The Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting could bend every effort to encourage positive influences on children's minds and weed out negative ones.

Beauty Without Cruelty was asked to submit its views on value-based education to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development (HRD) in 1997.

Once again BWC has requested the HRD Minister to include value-based education in schools across the country.



## Fact, not fancy Concern for animals a spiritual quality

By Nirmal Nishchit

**T**he 2006 Hindu-CNN-IBN State of the Nation Survey found 31 percent of Indians were pure vegetarians while another 9 percent consumed eggs, i.e. 363 million were lacto-vegetarians and 105 million lacto-ovo-vegetarians. Religion, community, caste, inherited cultural habits and location were influencing factors. Other surveys estimate up to 42 percent are vegetarian and less than 30 percent consume meat regularly. In vegetarian homes, it is mostly the male family members who sometimes consume non-vegetarian food outside the home. It has been observed that a majority of *Jains, Vaishnavas, Vaishyas, Baniyas, Marwaris, Komtis, Shettys, Chettiars, Lingayats*, and up to 55 percent of *Brahmins*, are vegetarian.

Religious heads successfully demanded that slaughterhouses remain closed on certain auspicious days. The Shankaracharyas and spiritual gurus like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar of the Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi, Dada J. P. Vaswani of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, Dadi Janki of Brahma Kumaris, Swami Chidananda Saraswati of Parmarth Ashram, Baba Ramdev, and Deepak Chopra extol the benefits of a vegetarian diet. For those who practice yoga, vegetarianism is also advocated by teachers such as *Yogacharya* B.K.S. Iyengar. The

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) temple runs lacto-vegetarian cafeterias and shops.

The sanctity of the places mentioned below is maintained with zero negativity as no animals are killed, or carcasses consumed, because religion plays an important role as manifested in laws, rules and orders which forbid the consumption of non-vegetarian foods. No one objects. In fact, people respect and implement such bans happily. Where bans do not exist, there are self-imposed restrictions by devotees who wouldn't dream of entering a temple with non-vegetarian food, leave alone consuming it within the temple precincts. State-by-state notes follow.

**Andhra Pradesh:** The famous Sri Venkateswara Temple at Tirupati requests people visiting Tirumala to offer due respect by not eating non-vegetarian food inside.

**Bihar:** A campaign launched in 2006 to turn Bodh Gaya, where Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment, into a vegetarian zone is gaining support. At Pawapuri in Nalanda District, where Lord Mahavir attained salvation, everyone abstains from non-vegetarian food and alcohol. Fishing is prohibited around the *Jal Mandir*.

**Chhatisgarh:** Meat has been banned by the state government at Dongargh, a pilgrimage centre near Raipur. Two other temple towns of the state, Rajim and Shivrinarayan, are eagerly awaiting a similar ban.

**Delhi:** In 1983 the Municipal Corporation of New Delhi banned restaurants serving non-vegetarian food within 100 metres of a temple. The Delhi High Court upheld the ban in 2003, and it is being enforced. The Jain Bird Hospital opposite the Red Fort is owned and run free of charge by the adjoining Digambar Jain *Lal Mandir*. No food is allowed to be taken into the Akshardham or Swaminarayan Temple complex. Pure vegetarian food is available inside. The *Kaal Bhairava* temples in places like New Delhi and Varanasi feature statues of dogs. A temple at Channapatna's Ramanagar District in Karnataka also honours dogs. At the main temple in Khanpur, Patiala, the first *bhogs*, or offerings, have been given to dogs for over 300 years.

**Gujarat:** At Palitana, where there are hundreds of Jain temples, no non-vegetarian food is served or sold. In March 2010 the High Court dismissed a petition, filed by fishermen, challenging the order banning fishing in Palitana District's Shetrunji River.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's decision to close slaughterhouses and ban the sale of meat for the nine days of *Paryushan* was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2008. The city has a strong tradition of being *shuddh shakahari* – so much so, the world's first all-vegetarian Pizza Hut opened here.

To commemorate the 2,600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir in 2001, Gujarat prohibited cooking, bringing into



its buildings and serving non-vegetarian food (including eggs) in all its state guest houses, at its Mount Abu, Rajasthan, circuit house and the Gujarat Bhavan, New Delhi.

Vegetarian cuisine is served at local restaurants around the holy places of Girnar, Taranga Hills, Somnath, and Veraval; only vegetarian *Kathiawad* food is available at Dwarka in Saurashtra.

**Haryana:** Sixty two percent of Haryana's population is vegetarian. The Agarwals observe strict lacto-vegetarianism, especially in their Agroha Temple complex near Hisar. Their ancient King Agroha curbed deer-hunting by fining people for hunting deer. He was known to worship snakes. Many *gaushalas* have been set up by the Agarwal community because King Agrasen cast the cow in the sacred role of a *mata*.

**Jammu and Kashmir:** All restaurants at Katra, which serves as the base camp for *yatras* to Vaishno Devi, provide pure vegetarian food.

**Jharkhand:** Jains believe that the tigers living in the Parasnath Temple's dense cliff forest and shrines near Dhanbad are vegetarian.

**Karnataka:** There is no slaughterhouse at Shravanabelagola, a Jain pilgrimage centre. The state has banned consumption and sales of non-vegetarian food within a 200-metre radius of the Sree Datta Peetha cave temple in Chikmagalur District, enforced by a Rs. 500 fine. The consumption of non-

vegetarian food is also said to have been prohibited at the Baba Budangiri Shrine since 2004. Other pilgrimage sites in *Dakshina Kannada* and Udupi have imposed similar bans.

The Lord Ananthapadmanabha (Lord Vishnu) Temple near Mangalore is reportedly guarded by a vegetarian crocodile which lives in the temple lake. Priests offer it *prasadam/naivedyam* every morning.

**Kerala:** As the town of Guruvayoor, near Thrissur, revolves around the Sri Krishna Temple, all its restaurants offer only vegetarian food. However, the cruelty of keeping temple elephants cannot be excused here, as elsewhere.

About 5,000 *Sarpa Kavus*, or shrines dedicated to the serpent god, have snakes, lizards and frogs living in the thick foliage of groves adjoining temples owned mainly by Nair and Brahmin families.

Non-vegetarian food is not allowed in the Mata Amitanandamayi Math at Amritapuri, Kollam. The trust runs vegetarian soup kitchens in the U.S.

**Madhya Pradesh:** Non-vegetarian food has been banned at all (declared) Hindu religious sites. In Ujjain (Avantika) and the twin towns of Maheshwar and Amarkantak sales of meat, fish and eggs are forbidden except in certain parts of the towns.

Non-vegetarian food isn't allowed in the area of Bawangaja, a Jain pilgrimage centre.

Madhya Pradesh cuisine is mainly vegetarian, though only 35 percent are vegetarian in the state.

**Maharashtra:** Vegetarian food is found in the vicinity of the Sai Baba *Sansthan* complex at Shirdi. The five-star Hotel Sun-'n-Sand and Domino's Pizza voluntarily maintain the sanctity of their locations via strict vegetarian fare. Pune's Sadhu Vaswani Mission promotes vegetarianism and advocates observing November 25 as a Meatless Day. Vegetarian meals are cooked by the disciples at Pune's Osho Commune, in keeping with *Bhagwan* Rajneesh's philosophy.

**Orissa:** In 1994, the Puri Municipal Corporation stopped the sale and preparation of meat, fish, poultry, and eggs in all restaurants and shops within specific areas around the Jagannath Temple. Legend has it that the cooking of vegetarian food in the temple kitchen is supervised by the Goddess Lakshmi.

At the Konark Temple near Bhubhaneshwar, typical *Oriya* food – rice with vegetables – is available.

**Puducherry:** The Sri Aurobindo *Ashram* serves vegetarian dishes, most of which are made from vegetables grown on its farm.

**Punjab:** The state is 48 percent vegetarian.

Some minority sects of Sikhs like the *Namdharis* are strict vegetarians. The Golden Temple in Amritsar forbids the consumption of non-vegetarian food within its

perimeter. *Langars*, or free community vegetarian meals, are dished out at all *gurdwaras*.

The Radha Soami Satsang Beas *Dera (ashram) langar* also feeds visitors daily vegetarian meals. The *dera's* 6,000 residents are vegetarians who grow their own produce on over a 1,000 acres.

**Rajasthan:** Rajasthan is 63 percent vegetarian. The Bishnoi community has protected wildlife and trees, on religious grounds, for centuries. One of the community's commandments is to be compassionate towards all living beings and another, not to eat meat.

Pushkar, a pilgrimage centre near Ajmer, has an unwritten but well-observed rule of pure vegetarianism. The Rankapur Jain Temple features a carving made out of a single marble rock, depicting 108 snakes' heads. The Karani *Mata* temple at Deshnok Village, near Bikaner, houses thousands of rats. They have been considered sacred for generations.

Shaakambhari Temples are so called because the goddess provides vegetarian food for her devotees. These temples are mainly found in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

**Tamil Nadu:** Saivism is an ancient religion and the community has always been vegetarian. Groups of Tamils such as Aravor, Anthanar and Parpar are all pure vegetarians, and some Vellalas enjoy higher community status by virtue of being hereditary vegetarians.

Non-vegetarian food is not allowed at the Theosophical Society's international headquarters at Adyar, Chennai. Mylapore has several old temples, and non-vegetarian food is unavailable in the Brahmin-dominated Mada Veethi area.

**Uttar Pradesh:** Meat, fish and eggs are not permitted to be sold around shrines like Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama.

Not far from Mathura and resembling the Taj Mahal, the Jaigurudeo Temple (Naam Yog Sadhna *Mandir*) prohibits non-vegetarians' donations.

Any food served around the Mahaparinirvana Buddhist Temple at Kushinagar has to be pure vegetarian. No animal can be slaughtered in Sarnath, as the city has no abattoir.

Vrindavan has a number of restrictions: no non-vegetarian food, smoking, drinking, entering temples wearing or bearing shoes or any leather items. The *ashrams* serve *saatvik* food.

In 1994, on religious grounds, the historical Jain pilgrimage centre at Hastinapur, in Meerut District, was declared a vegetarian zone.

**Uttarakhand:** No one is allowed to consume non-vegetarian items in Rishikesh, Haridwar (Mayapuri) and Muni Ki Reti. The Chandi Devi Temple at Haridwar prohibits non-vegetarian food, alcohol and leather accessories on its premises. In 2004 the Supreme Court upheld a notification issued by the Rishikesh Municipal Board banning the sale of eggs,

an add-on to the existing ban on meat sales. Moreover, no shops are allowed to sell non-vegetarian food on the *yatra* route to these places.

**Uttaranchal:** Serving non-vegetarian food is prohibited at hotels, guest houses, restaurants and eateries at and around the holy places of Badrinath, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Gangotri, close to the Indo-Tibetan border.

**West Bengal:** Unlike other Kali temples, animals are not sacrificed at the Dakshineswar Temple, near Kolkata. Symbolic *bali*, the ritual sacrifice of white pumpkins, sugarcane and bananas is gradually becoming more frequent, replacing animal sacrifices, e.g. *Sandhi Puja* for the Goddess Durga on *Maha Ashtami* and during *Navami Puja* at the Ramakrishna *Math* and Mission at Belur.

The Islamic Jahar Peer (Gogaji), and Hindu serpent deities like Manasa and Jory, are worshipped to prevent or cure snake-bites. Aranyani is the goddess of forests and wildlife, Hanuman the monkey-god. The mouse is worshipped as Lord Ganesha's vehicle, and the cow is sacred to Krishna's devotees.

*There are places of worship in every Indian city, town and village. It is impossible for BWC to check all of them, documenting those which have disallowed meat consumption, forbidden leather inside, or are dedicated to particular animals. If readers happen to know of any other community or sacred place that upholds the principle of ahinsa, we request that they inform us.*



## Blood from and for vegetarians only

By Diana Ratnagar

**F**ear, terror, bewilderment, panic, anger and helplessness are experienced by animals facing butchers who contemptuously turn sheep to mutton, pigs to pork, cattle to beef and so on. These negative emotions, present in the animals' flesh in their last moments, get transferred to those who consume meat. Therefore I equate accepting a blood transfusion from a non-vegetarian to consuming animal-derived products.

About 15 years ago, when a blood transfusion was necessary, I refused to accept it unless the donor was a pure vegetarian. Fortunately Dr. Kalyan Gangwal – famous for promoting vegetarianism – was happy to oblige.

Subsequently, Beauty Without Cruelty tried, unsuccessfully, to get the Indian Red Cross Society and other blood banks to segregate blood originating from vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

At the time Dr. D. C. Jain (Head, Department of Neurology, Vardhman Mahavir Medical College, and Safdarjang Hospital, and Addl. D.G. Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi) pointed out two facts in favour of vegetarians' blood:

- The blood of a non-vegetarian would invariably have a higher uric level.
- Abnormal lipids are common in the blood of non-vegetarians, particularly higher levels of cholesterol and tri-glycerides.

Dr. Jain therefore felt that, if vegetarian blood was marked as such, there would be more demand for it.

### Many vegetarians would like their blood to go exclusively to other vegetarians like themselves.

Recently, our member Col. Beant Parmar, wrote Beauty Without Cruelty:

*I am a bit extremist in my views. Human insensitivity to other animals amazes and enrages me. I don't know what class it puts me in, but I have begun to consider vegetarians and non-vegetarians as separate peoples though, on the surface, that may seem a casual difference. Actually it is a deep difference of heart, the reason why the flesh-eating classes cannot fathom the horrors they indulge in.*

*So a seemingly cruel thought came to my mind when someone wanted me to register for donating blood: why should I show compassion to someone involved in the cruel deaths of innocent animals who, like me, want to live?*

*I can give blood only to people who do not eat animal flesh. I cannot give blood to people who eat animals.*


There are many vegetarians who for whatever reason – religious, ethical, health – would prefer blood transfusions exclusively from donors who are strict vegetarians, like themselves. Many vegetarians would like their blood to go exclusively to other vegetarians like themselves.

The implementation of this idea lies in the hands of every vegetarian blood donor and donee. They need to insist on giving blood to vegetarians, and taking blood from vegetarians.

Those who believe in promoting vegetarian blood, and are in a position to influence events, should get as many blood collection centres as possible to mark the bottles collected from vegetarian donors as such. These should be supplied only to those who state their desire for them explicitly. Blood banks and hospitals with vegetarian trustees can insist on the segregation of blood by origin.

The same should apply to posthumous organ donations. My soul would be upset if my cornea was used by a person who looked at meat dishes with a view to enjoying them. Years ago, someone from the Times Eye Research Foundation stated that the majority of Indian eye donors were (Jain) vegetarians, though the majority of recipients were not.



 Diana Ratnagar is chairperson and managing trustee of BWC.

## FAQ

**V**ishwa (*Sanskrit for “the whole world”*) was an exhibition/conference to support eco-friendly business solutions held at the Ravindra Natya Mandir, Mumbai, in 2009. Promoted by the Institute for Studies in Vedic Sciences, Vishwa 2009 was a first-ever endeavour to acknowledge efforts for a greener tomorrow. Ranjit Konkar (RK) spoke at the conference, about animal rights questions frequently encountered by him. Three of them, the last in this series, were:

**Q: Where do you draw the line? At animals? Plants? Bacteria? Yeast? How about insects?**

**RK:** If you can't bear to see it, you shouldn't be a party to it. That is the criterion. Don't avoid seeing how your stuff comes to you. Watch the killing of an animal. Watch the chopping of a plant. Watch the dying of a bacterium under a microscope. Ask yourself, in the solitude of your conscience, which you can live with and which you cannot. And do as your conscience dictates. Because live we must — that is the basic premise. To live, we must take life. That is another given. We cannot live on air and water and soil. The effort should be to have the lives taken be as low as possible in their level of sentience.

Another rule of thumb: if you are doing something for enjoyment, do no harm. If you

are doing it for survival, do minimum harm. How important can enjoyment be, compared to survival? If my enjoyment is coming at the cost of someone else's survival there is reason for alarm. An Eskimo may argue, with validity, that he cannot survive without meat — but not a person living where agricultural produce is available.

**Q: If you don't object to tigers killing zebras, why do you object to humans killing goats?**

**RK:** Because, my friend, there is a difference between us and tigers, which not only can't digest anything but flesh, but are also programmed by Nature to unthinkingly recognise zebras as food. We are human beings with a head start on evolution — physical, mental, and spiritual — and are not limited to measuring ourselves by the yardsticks of tigers or lions any more. We have bodies that can digest succulent plant material like fruit best; we have minds best sharpened by eating almonds; and souls that started becoming uncomfortable watching the suffering of other animals at our hands a few thousand years ago. Do you deny that? My ideal of humanity is a decent human being like Buddha and Mahavira in touch with his conscience, not a tiger in touch only with its hormones.

**Q: But we eat plants, don't we? So what is wrong with eating animals?**


**RK:** Now imagine imploring a cannibal to get him to see

the wrongfulness of eating human flesh on the grounds of how much humans have to suffer when being killed. The cannibal might reply, “But we eat animals also, don't we? So what is wrong with eating humans?” If eating plants justifies eating animals, then eating animals should justify eating humans. Are you ready to accept that? Isn't it mindless to say that causing pain to a being that is less sensitive to pain justifies causing pain to one that is more sensitive to it?

There are those who rebut this argument saying plants and animals are equally sensitive to pain. They say: “Just because you can't see it, how do you know the plants' pain isn't as great as the animals'?” Even assuming for the sake of argument that the intensity of animals' pain is less than that of humans' if one takes factors like emotions and spirituality into account, how would we answer a cannibal who asked, “How do you know that the animals' pain isn't as much as humans'?”

Why not address the problem that is clear to us rather than wait for the jury's verdict to be in on what is not as clear?



 *Dr. Ranjit Konkar is an associate senior faculty member at the National Institute of Design as well as a BWC trustee.*

## Around the world

### Shocking decline in bird populations

Environmental damage has caused a rapid decline in the number of North American songbirds. "... in the next 100 years we are going to lose 10 to 15 percent of the world's birds in terms of species," says Bridget Stutchbury, a York University, Toronto, professor. She warns that more bird species will be at risk unless large natural breeding grounds are protected environmentally. The common forest wood thrush has declined 40 percent in the last half-century because of habitat loss due to urban sprawl and clear-cutting. This is the United Nations' international year of biodiversity. Many countries signed a 1992 treaty agreeing to cuts in the loss of species and ecosystems. They are negotiating new targets, having failed to meet the old ones. Tropical forests that serve as migratory bird refuges every winter are being cleared to make way for coffee plantations. Pesticide use is another problem for the birds, who help forests by controlling the number of insects and by spreading seeds. In India too the nesting, roosting and feeding of birds have been adversely affected by humans in many ways. As a result the populations of birds such as sparrows and vultures have declined dramatically.



Emissions from telecom towers are causing infertility among the Indian sparrow population. Photo courtesy: Vishwajeet Naik

## Doomed Manitoban bears

University of Alberta biologist Ian Stirling has been studying polar bears 37 years. He says the western Hudson Bay population of polar bears, estimated at 935 in 2004, is expected to decline over the next 30 years to a point where there will not be enough bears to sustain breeding. The increasing length of the ice-free season on Hudson Bay will soon reach a point where 20 to 30 percent of the polar bears in Manitoba, a Canadian province, will die off annually, according to a mathematical analysis by Andrew Derocher, another University of Alberta biologist who has studied the bears 28 years. The construction of a rescue facility for orphaned, injured or problem polar bears at the Assiniboine Park Zoo commenced in Winnipeg, capital of Manitoba, last June.

## Whale-hunting loophole

The annual International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting failed again, a few months ago, to tackle rampant commercial whaling by Japan, Iceland and Norway. Consensus eluded a compromise deal that would have had the three countries regulate and reduce their hunts. Despite a global moratorium on commercial whale hunts these countries continue hunting whales, exploiting a "scientific whaling" clause in the IWC rules. This is the single greatest threat to the world's endangered whale population. The blue whale, the earth's largest and longest-lived mammal, had been driven almost to extinction before it began to be protected in 1966. Its numbers haven't recovered significantly, and climate change poses a further threat to the continued existence of many whale species. The logical solution, it is felt, is to implement a total ban on whaling, including "scientific" whaling. Whaling is, at any rate, still not endorsed by the global community. Many believe that other factors — declining demand, rising costs, international pressure, direct action — will bring an end to whaling anyway.



## Readers write



### Milk of human unkindness!

The article “Fate worse than death for cows,” in the Summer issue, uncovered cruelty most people choose to ignore. Interestingly, the consumption of milk is said to be almost non-existent among the *Korku* tribes of Melghat, a remote region of Maharashtra. They believe a mother’s milk is meant exclusively for her offspring, whether human or animal.

Although I stopped consuming dairy products over 23 years ago, for compassionate reasons, I found that it is also beneficial for one’s health and for the environment. I have no calcium or protein deficiencies, contrary to what the dairy industry and even some doctors would like people to believe. I take Vitamin B12, but have not had to take any medicines during the last 22 years. At the age of 76, I am able to cycle 50 km or walk 20-25 km in a day without ill-effects.

**Surendra T. Shah**

## Vegan recipe

### Scrambled tofu with spinach and mushrooms

(Serves 4)

#### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup fresh sliced mushrooms
- 4 tomatoes
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bunch spinach, rinsed and chopped
- 500 grams firm tofu, well pressed and crumbled
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste.

#### Preparation:

Sauté 2 chopped tomatoes, garlic, onions and mushrooms in olive oil for 2-3 minutes. Reduce heat and add spinach, crumbled tofu, soy sauce and lemon juice. Cover and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with a dash of salt and pepper, garnishing with 2 tomatoes before serving with toast.



## FYI

### Taamasik, raajasik, and saatvik food

Based on the effect foods may have on individual personality through chemical action on the brain, Hinduism classifies foods in three groups: *taamasik*, *raajasik*, and *saatvik*.

Foods which are dead, partly spoiled, processed, preserved or stale are called *taamasik*. Such foods create feelings of heaviness, lethargy, irritability and restlessness. Meat is also *taamasik* when not fresh. Once animal cells die, the process of degeneration and decay begins.

Some meats are, however, *raajasik* in effect. Foods which are cooked a great deal to increase their taste-appeal, which stimulate the nervous system and speed metabolism up are *raajasik*. These foods enervate, but not in the sense of lending a clear, balanced energy. *Raajasik* foods tempt one to eat more, focusing the attention on savouring the foods, while diverting it from internal signals.

In contrast to the above two categories, those foods which are whole, fresh, natural, of good quality yet mild, neither over- nor under-cooked, are experienced as lending calm alertness and quiet energy. Such foods are called *saatvik* and are said to nourish the consciousness. *Saatvik* foods give psychological strength as contrasted to *raajasik* foods, which supply strength to the muscles. Fresh fruits, vegetables and wholesome grains are *saatvik*.

## BWC News & Views

### Beware: non-vegetarian products wrongly marked



Once again Beauty Without Cruelty has taken up the issue of imported packaged food items marked with the green vegetarian symbol although the ingredients are non-vegetarian. However, the Food & Drug Administration say they are not empowered to take significant action against importers.

A couple of examples: shrimp is listed as an ingredient in the Namjai brand's curry and soup pastes, imported from Thailand, and anchovies (small fish) in Lea & Perrins' Worcestershire Sauce. The importers, who have affixed the vegetarian symbol on these non-vegetarian products, are primarily at fault.

Certain foreign cheeses also display the vegetarian symbol, placed there by importers, though they declare rennet as an ingredient without stating its animal origin. Sometimes the origins of ingredients are unknown and verbal circularity is confusing, as in "cheese" being listed as an ingredient in cheeses! The ingredient "cheese" could be made with animal rennet.

The answer lies in being particular, reading labels carefully and checking ingredients thoroughly, the more so if no veg or non-veg symbol is on the packaged foods. When in doubt, it would be wiser for vegetarians not to purchase such products — and inform BWC.

### Games ad agencies play

Beauty Without Cruelty member Gopi Shankar drew our attention to Volkswagen's new "Polo" car advertisements in which buffaloes, rhinos and other animals were being cruelly aggravated. BWC wrote to the company condemning such advertisements and saying that irrespective of where and when they were filmed, and whether shown on TV or in print, they were subject to provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 and, if the ads were not withdrawn, we would be forced to complain to the Advertising Council of India as well as urge potential buyers to boycott the vehicles. They responded saying, "We have taken your concern very seriously and would request you to note that the campaign has been discontinued. We would once again like to thank you for bringing the matter to our notice."

This is not the first time Volkswagen has upset animal activists. In 2008 they pulled a commercial off British TV screens after the Advertising Standards Authority received over 500 complaints, and after a Royal SPCA investigation. That advertisement featured a dog sitting in the passenger seat of a Volkswagen Polo, "singing" the Spencer Davis Group song "I'm a Man" but shivering, trembling and cowering when outside the car — the dog's stunt double had been placed on a special motorized plate to create that effect on film. Volkswagen's advertising agencies seem to have a global penchant for playing games involving animals.

### Ban on peacock feather trade

In response to Beauty Without Cruelty's request, the Ministry of Environment & Forests is in the process of banning the trade in peacock feathers. It was brought to the ministry's attention that demand for the feathers outstripped their supply, leading to rampant poaching of peacocks.

Currently, the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 prohibits the killing of peacocks as well as export of tail feathers or articles made from them. But the Act allows domestic trade on the assumption that the feathers are shed naturally.

Amendments to Sections 43(3) (a) and 44 of the Act will no longer exempt those possessing a certificate of ownership for peacocks from transferring or selling their tail feathers, nor articles or trophies made from them. Peacocks and their friends will be relieved to know that a comprehensive ban on the sale, transfer and trade of peacock feathers will be imposed except for religious use.

### hinsa vs. ahinsa

The printed version of **hinsa vs. ahinsa** will reach members just before the Jain *Paryushan* which begins on September 5. We hope it will generate substantial financial support to enable Beauty Without Cruelty to expand its efforts to promote animal rights.

## Nag Panchmi

Photo courtesy: Alok Upadhyay



Snakes are caught from the wilds and kept in small boxes, plastic jars, sacks, baskets or earthen pots. They are starved, and their fangs brutally pulled out. Their mouths are then stitched shut, sometimes with a space left for their tongues to come out.

Spectators are to believe that snakes dance to music, but this is not true because snakes don't have ears. They sway to the movements of the flutes and spread their hoods to defend themselves. The *haldi*, *kumkum* and *gulal* put on the snakes inevitably enter their eyes, blinding some of them because of their lead content.

Photo courtesy: freewareindia.blogspot.com



Only mammals can produce and drink milk. Snakes, being reptiles, do not normally drink milk but, because they are kept without food and water for days, try to drink milk in an attempt to rehydrate.

The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 bans the display of wild animals, but this law is blatantly violated year after year.

Let's celebrate this *Nag Panchmi* with snake idols or pictures instead!



Photo courtesy: Vithal A. Naukudkar



Photo courtesy: www.timescontent.com