

Bhāviveka's Anti-vegetarianism and its Contradiction with the *Laṅkāvatāra*

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Summary

Whether or not the Buddha really died from eating a rotten pork dish, it appears certain that, during the earliest period of the Buddhist tradition in India, meat was not comprehensively prohibited for ordained monks and nuns. Certain restrictions were applied in their partaking of meat, but the Buddhist canon unambiguously records that the Buddha refused to adopt vegetarianism when it was proposed by his cousin, or the *saṅgha*-splitter, Devadatta. The most commonly cited permission for meat-eating for the ordained is epitomized in the concept of "pure in three aspects" (*trikoṭīśuddha*) according to which a Buddhist monk or nun can eat donated meat unless she or he has directly seen, heard, or suspected that an animal was killed specifically for his or her own sake. This conditional allowance of a meat diet came to be completely banned, however, in several Mahāyāna sūtras that appeared in the first half of the first millennium, including most famously, the *Laṅkāvatāra*.

Nearly all of the Indic materials that record discussions of meat-eating are canonical, that is, believed to have been spoken by the Buddha himself and therefore of a prescriptive nature. The one exception is the anti-vegetarian polemic that consists of seven verses accompanied by

auto-commentary in the ninth Mīmāṃsā chapter of the *Madhyamakahr̥dayakārikā* composed by the sixth-century Madhyamaka scholar, Bhāviveka (500-570 CE). This text is noteworthy because it documents an active defense of a Buddhist meat diet against others' censure. However, while he refutes his non-Buddhist opponent's claims, Bhāviveka eventually contradicts a pro-vegetarian Mahāyāna sūtra, the *Laṅkāvatāra*. This paper argues that Bhāviveka's anti-vegetarian discourse cannot avoid being read as a critique, even though he did not intend for it to be so.

Keywords

Bhāviveka, Indian Buddhism, *Laṅkāvatāra*, *Madhyamakahr̥daya*, Vegetarianism

I. Introduction

Vegetarianism was one of the five proposals of Devadatta to the Buddha in his schismatic effort. Interestingly, the Buddha, while allowing other proposals such as exclusively living in the forest, eating food that was begged, wearing a robe made of rags, and living at the root of a tree as an optional mode of monks' life, turned down vegetarianism by confirming his principle that meat pure in three respects—which is “not seen, heard, or suspected (to have been killed on purpose for him)”—is edible.¹⁾ However, several Mahāyāna sūtras, most famously the *Laṅkāvatāra* (LAS) and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, feature the Buddha prohibiting any form of meat-eating, denying the literal interpretation of his former allowance.

Bhāviveka's anti-vegetarian arguments, contained in the seven verses of the ninth Mīmāṃsā chapter of his *Verses on the Heart of Madhyamaka* (*Madhyamakahr̥dayakārikā*; MHK), along with the commentary, the *Flame of Reasoning* (*Tarkājvālā*; TJ), demonstrate a unique example of how an Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist defended his meat diet. Despite its uniqueness, this text has not drawn much scholarly attention,²⁾

1) See Horner 1963, 276-277.

2) Most recently, Schmithausen (2020, 151ff.) introduces and explains the contents of Bhāviveka's

and accordingly, its contents have not been properly analyzed and related to other pro-vegetarian Mahāyāna sūtras. Noting that Bhāviveka's arguments may be read as a refutation of the *Laṅkāvatāra*'s vegetarianism, this paper aims to better understand this rather isolated instance of a Buddhist defense of meat-eating.

II. Difficulties in Harmonizing Bhāviveka's Arguments and the *Laṅkāvatāra*

In studying Bhāviveka's anti-vegetarian arguments, Kawasaki's translations (1985 and 1993) are pioneering in that they, for the first time, seemingly reported the unique opinion submitted by a Mahāyāna Buddhist to defend Buddhists' practice of meat-eating.³⁾ His initiative should be fully acknowledged. However, his assessment of that section of MHK 9 is highly problematic because in a number of places Kawasaki tries to attenuate the conflict between Bhāviveka's arguments and the pro-vegetarian discourses found in other Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Laṅkāvatāra*. Toward the end of his first article, Kawasaki states:

Now, when we compare Bhāviveka's claims in TJ with the scriptures referred to [in it], that is, the *Āṅgulimālīya* and the *Laṅkāvatāra*, that it [=MHK/TJ] is based especially on the Meat-Eating Chapter (*māṃsa-bhakṣaṇa*) [=LAS 8] becomes evident. However, when each case is examined in detail, Bhāviveka does not follow what the *Laṅkāvatāra* says as it is and we can observe that he adds considerable changes.⁴⁾

anti-vegetarian arguments contained in MHK and TJ. See Schmithausen 2020, 151ff. However, therein a possible contradiction between Bhāviveka's discourse and the *Laṅkāvatāra*'s vegetarianism is not considered.

- 3) The early Buddhists' practice of eating meat is generally assumed in the early canonical literature. See Hopkins 1906. The defensive mode of arguments about Buddhists' meat diet is found in the *Cullavagga* 239-252 (Norman 2001[1992], 30-2).

Here, Kawasaki correctly notes that Bhāṣivēka's arguments have a close relationship with LAS 8. But, as he himself meticulously cites in the footnotes to his translation, the relationship between MHK/TJ 9 and LAS 8 is not that the former based its arguments on the latter. Nor did Bhāṣivēka introduce some changes into LAS 8's discourse. Rather, they are directly opposed to each other; that is, they are in conflict.⁵⁾

Moreover, Kawasaki groundlessly presupposes that Bhāṣivēka "shows a negative attitude toward meat-eating as it was a natural thing for a sixth century Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist" (1985, 174-5). He qualifies this remark in the following manner.

It is only because the opponent of this chapter [=MHK 9] is the Mīmāṃsakas, who approve of animal sacrifice in a ritual setting, and because he [=Bhāṣivēka] discusses the topic of meat-eating with the Mīmāṃsakas solely from a logical viewpoint, that he manifests a tone of argument different from the anti-meat-eating arguments of the Chinese and Japanese Buddhists who advocate morality by emphasizing the spirit of compassion.⁶⁾

Kawasaki, first of all, reduces the difference between Bhāṣivēka and other Mahāyāna sūtras, represented in the quote about Chinese and Japanese Buddhists, to simply a difference in tone. He lists two possible explanatory factors for that difference: one is that the addressee of Bhāṣivēka's arguments is the Mīmāṃsakas and the other is that the whole argument is made only on the logical level.

Of these two arguments, I only acknowledge the second one. Bhāṣivēka's

4) Kawasaki 1985, 180; translated from Japanese.

5) His assessment in the English article (1993, 77) is more acceptable. "At the first glance it seems that much of his assertion is based on, and agrees with, the Māṃsa-bhākṣaṇa Chapter of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. But when we examine closely and in details, we can see his standpoint differs from that of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. Some of the reasons, though employed by the both sides, lead to the contrary conclusions; conditional admission in Bhavya and total prohibition of meat-eating in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*." Here Kawasaki at least admits that Bhāṣivēka's arguments is not something changed from LAS 8 but something different. However, it is wrong to state that there are some reasons commonly used by Bhāṣivēka and LAS. It appears, as we shall see, that Bhāṣivēka's arguments can be seen as refutations of the reasons adduced in LAS 8's pro-vegetarianism discourse.

6) Kawasaki 1985, 175; translated from Japanese.

anti-vegetarianism arguments are not of a stand-alone type, that is, they are meaningful only when counterpart arguments are assumed and they are specifically devised to refute them. However, I do not understand how the first factor, the Mīmāṃsaka identity of the opponent, can justify his judgement that Bhāviveka was actually not opposed to vegetarianism. Is Kawasaki alluding that Bhāviveka’s entire argument is criticism for the sake of criticism and, as such, it is not to be taken at the face value, which would imply that Bhāviveka, though a Mahāyāna Buddhist, is anti-vegetarian? Even if we tentatively accept that Bhāviveka is arguing a position that he does not really support, what does it mean that he puts anti-vegetarianism arguments forward against animal sacrificers? The pro-meat-eating thesis and pro-animal-sacrifice thesis seem to be not in opposition, but, rather, in harmony.

III. Identifying Bhāviveka’s Opponent

Kawasaki’s reason for not fully admitting that Bhāviveka really meant his anti-vegetarianism can be found in one paragraph at the beginning of his section on anti-vegetarianism.

How can the Bhagavan of great compassion—who regards all sentient beings as his only son and who possesses affection [toward all sentient beings] from the depths of [his] marrow—approve of meat-eating? In the Mahāyāna sutras, Bhagavan just does not approve. In [Mahāyāna] sūtras such as the *Hastikakṣya*, the *Mahāmegha*, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and the *Aṅgulimāliya*, any form of meat-eating is prohibited.⁷⁾

7) TJ D309a3-4, “*thugs rje chen po dang ldan pa’i bcom ldan ’das, sems can thams cad la bu geig pa ltar dgongs pa, rus pa dang rkang pa’i gting nas brtse ba mnga’ ba, des ji ltar na sha za bar rjes su gnang ba yin? theg pa chen po’i gzhung las bcom ldan ’das kyis ma gnang ba kho na yin te. glang po’i rtsal dang sprin chen po dang lang kar gshegs pa dang sor mo’i phreng ba la sogs pa’i mdo las sha za ba rnam pa thams cad du bkag pa myid yin no.*”

In this quote, Bhāviveka’s remarks are unambiguously in favor of vegetarianism. Bhāviveka dismisses meat-eating as an impossibility and makes a note that in such and such Mahāyāna sūtras, it is unconditionally prohibited. This quote is indeed a problem for reading this section, because immediately after it beginning with the phrase “[however,] in the scripture of Śrāvakayāna,” Bhāviveka consistently refutes anti-meat-eating arguments. What is more problematic is that almost all of those arguments that Bhāviveka criticizes appear in LAS 8. Thus, when we compare each counterpart argument from those two texts separately and out of context, it appears that Bhāviveka is deliberately criticizing LAS 8. The hermeneutic problem arising from the fact that Bhāviveka fully acknowledges the authority of LAS 8 while in effect criticizing the view contained within it is hard to resolve solely based on the immediate context of his text. Bhāviveka does not thematize the contradiction and those Mahāyāna sūtras are not mentioned again in the subsequent arguments. This issue should be approached only after reviewing other relevant portions of Bhāviveka’s works that illuminate Bhāviveka’s attitude toward the authority of scripture in general and the authority of the Mahāyāna scriptures in particular. I refrain from discussing it here.⁸⁾

On the surface level of the text, however, no explicit contradiction is noticed because even though Bhāviveka’s arguments do appear to be a refutation of LAS 8, Bhāviveka makes it clear against whom he is formulating his anti-vegetarianism arguments. And the opponent is not the Mīmāṃsakas as Kawasaki supposes.

The broader context of the anti-vegetarianism section is of course MHK 9, which is devoted to the Mīmāṃsaka opponents. However, this section (MHK 9.132-138) is included in one of the digressions of MHK 9 that denounces the authority of the Veda

8) Ruegg’s (1980) division of Mahāyāna Buddhists into those Mahāyānists who continued to follow the Śrāvakayāna vinaya and those who adopted a unique Mahāyāna code may help us explain Bhāviveka’s obvious contradiction away. As far as Bhāviveka acknowledges the authority of the pro-vegetarian Mahāyāna sūtras, but, at the same time, defends the condition for eating meat laid out in the Śrāvakayāna vinaya such as “meat pure in three aspects” (*tikoṭiparisuddha*; see below), he can be said, in Ruegg’s terms, a Mahāyānist only on the philosophical level.

on the score that it teaches absurd austere practices such as jumping into a fire (*agniprapāta*; 127-128) and abstaining from food and drink (*annapānāparityāga*; 129). The opponent tries to defend the thesis that fasting is a meritorious practice (130ab), which Bhāviveka rejects on logical grounds (130cd-131). In TJ on MHK 9.131, Bhāviveka presents another point of attack, namely, the internal inconsistencies found in the scripture of the opponent. In this context, Bhāviveka identifies the scripture of the opponent as the *Mahābhārata* (*rgyas byed*).⁹ In fact, Kawasaki identifies the Tibetan word “*rgyas byed*” with the *Mahābhārata* (1992b, 140-1) in his reference to this same text-place.

To illustrate his points, Bhāviveka quotes fifteen verses from the *Mahābhārata* and divides them into four groups so that he can demonstrate the internal contradictions within each group. For example, in the last group of *Mahābhārata* quotes, Bhāviveka first cites a verse that urges one to fight and die on the battlefield and promises a heavenly abode to the warrior. Then, he contrasts that verse with another verse that warns that one who does harm to others would fall into a hell, finally quoting the famous Golden Rule, “do not do to others what is not agreeable to oneself” (*na tat parasya saṃdadyāt pratikūlaṃ yad ātmanaḥ*).¹⁰ Although I could only identify four verses among the fifteen quotations from the *Mahābhārata*,¹¹ it is significant that those four verses all come from *Mahābhārata* Books 12 (Śāntiparvan) and 13 (Anuśāsanaparvan), which espouse Brahmanical renunciatory values (especially, *ahimsā*) sometimes with the Sāṃkhya-Yoga metaphysics.

The immediate response of the opponents to this critique also reveals that the opponents uphold that portion of the *Mahābhārata*.

9) TJ D308a5, “Since there is the following contradiction between the former and later parts in [your] scripture, that is, the *Mahābhārata*, it [=your pro-fasting argument] is not rational.” (*rgyas byed la sogs pa'i lung las 'di ltar snga phyi 'gal ba yang yod pas, rigs pa ma yin te.*)

10) *Mahābhārata* 13.114.8ab.

11) The second quote (TJ D308a6-7) corresponds to the *Mahābhārata* 12.214.4 and 13.93.4, the fifth (TJ D308b1) to 12.236.10, the ninth (TJ D308b3) to 12.80.17, and the fifteenth (TJ D308b7-309a1) to 13.114.8.

Even though Buddhists are sarcastic toward others and they criticize others while thinking “we are abiding by dharma,” it is well known that they themselves make a great effort to eat meat. Since one cannot obtain meat without killing the life of sentient beings, they are devoid of compassion, and therefore, they are sinners like animal hunters.¹²⁾

Here we encounter the “no meat without killing” logic, the attestation in the Brahmanical sources for which Alsdorf lists the *Mahābhārata* 13.116.26.¹³⁾

Therefore, when all these circumstances are taken into consideration, it is reasonable to conclude that the opponents in the anti-vegetarianism section of MHK 9 are not the Mīmāṃsakas but rather the Brahmanical renunciants who endorse the authority of, and bases their arguments on, the 12th and 13th Books of the *Mahābhārata*. This fact is also reflected in Bhāviveka’s arguments themselves. Throughout this section, most of the materials for the arguments that Bhāviveka is countering can be found in the *Mahābhārata* 13.114-117, in which “the most detailed treatment of the theme of *ahiṃsā* and vegetarianism is located.” (Alsdorf 2010, 34)

IV. A Comparative Reading of Bhāviveka’s Anti-Vegetarianism Arguments

Despite the fact that the argument based on the “no meat without killing” logic is of prime importance among others found in the vegetarianism section of the *Mahābhārata*, and that Bhāviveka introduces his opponent as arguing along the same line of the thought, Bhāviveka discusses that argument only as one among six related issues. As

12) TJ D309a1-2, “*sangs rgyas pa ni 'di ltar* “*bdag nyid chos la gnas pa yin no*” *snyam du sems shing gzhan la kha zer zhing dmod par byed kyang, rang nyid sha za ba la 'bad pa cher byed par grags la. sems can srog ma bcad par ni sha rnyed par mi 'gyur bas, des na snying rje dang bral ba yin pa'i phyir, ri dwags kyi rngon pa la sogs pa bzhin du sdig pa byed pa nyid yin no.*”

13) The numbering of the *Mahābhārata* is and will be noted according to the Critical Edition.

Kawasaki (1985) did in his translation, Bhāviveka’s whole section on anti-vegetarianism can be divided into six parts. Except for the first part (MHK 9.132-3), one verse, together with TJ commentary, forms a part, each of which is designed to refute specific anti-meat-eating arguments. In what follows, I briefly summarize each argument. I will also note the “sources” for the opponent’s arguments in the *Mahābhārata* that possibly could have motivated Bhāviveka’s own arguments. I cite the *Mahābhārata* as a “source” since Bhāviveka does not directly engage in a debate with the *Mahābhārata*, nor does the *Mahābhārata* show any intention to criticize Buddhists’ meat diet. In short, Bhāviveka is against not the *Mahābhārata* itself, but an anonymous opponent who takes the *Mahābhārata* as scripture and formulates criticisms of Buddhists’ meat diet based on that scripture. Finally, I also note parallel arguments from LAS 8. It is surprising that each of Bhāviveka’s arguments can be seen as a critique of LAS 8 since the latter’s anti-meat-eating argument shares with the *Mahābhārata* more or less the same materials. The relationship between these three texts will be reflected on after a review of Bhāviveka’s arguments.

1. Eating meat pure in three aspects does not constitute a sin (MHK 9.132–3)

The first argument consists of two syllogisms devised to prove, in general terms, that there is no relevant relationship between meat-eating and negative karmic effect: Meat pure in the three aspects does not constitute a sin (*enas* or *pāpa*) because it, like vegetarian food, would only exit the eater in the forms of semen, urine, and vomit (*rasādīpariṇāmitvāt*) and it is, like other food, merely a means for counteracting hunger (*kṣutpratīkārahetuvāt*). For example, eating begged food (*bhāikṣāna*) and incidentally acquired food (*yadr̥cchāgatabhakta*) are not counted as sinful acts.¹⁴⁾

14) MHK 9.132-133, “[Thesis:] Eaten meat pure in three aspects does not [lead the eater] to a sin. [Reason:] because it would [only] turn into bodily fluid and so forth. [Example:] just as [eaten] begged food does not [lead the eater] to a sin. [Thesis:] It is not for the sake of evil (*pāpakāraṇāt*) one enjoys eating food [made of] meat. It is not out of evil intention that one enjoys meat-eating. [Reason:] because it is [merely]

Here Bhāviveka openly refers to the particular conditions under which a Buddhist monk can eat meat: if one does not see or hear or suspect that the meat being served was killed especially for oneself, then one can partake of such meat. This condition of meat called “pure in the three aspects” (*trikoṭisuddha*; Pāli *tikoṭiparisuddha*) is, as Bhāviveka notes, the regulation contained in the Śrāvakayāna canon such as the *Pāli Vinaya*.¹⁵⁾ The purpose of reference to this stipulation seems to counteract the general framework that views meat-eating as a karmic fault (*doṣa*) employed in the *Mahābhārata*¹⁶⁾ and LAS 8.¹⁷⁾ In one verse, LAS 8 explicitly calls the meat-eater (*māṃsakhādaka*) the evil-doer (*pāpakarmin*) who would be tormented in hell.¹⁸⁾

As Alsdorf (2010, 6) points out, this stipulation of meat pure in three aspects is particularly laid out “so that the responsibility for the killing does neither directly nor indirectly fall upon” the eater and Bhāviveka makes use of the original purpose of this stipulation to reveal that the framework that views meat-eating as a karmically negative act as stated in the *Mahābhārata* and LAS 8 is inapplicable to the case of Buddhist monks’ and nuns’ practice of eating meat that unexpectedly falls into the alms bowl. Most importantly, in this regard, TJ notes that when one eats meat pure in the three aspects, the eater “is devoid of evil intention” (*sdig pa’i sems dang bral ba yin*).¹⁹⁾ This seems to emphasize that, in Buddhism, karmic value is exclusively

a cause for counteracting hunger. [Example:] just as food gained by chance.” (*trikoṭisuddham yan māṃsaṃ na tad bhakṣitam enase/ rasādīpariṇāmitvād bhaiṣṅnam na yathainase// na māṃsabhakṣaṇaṃ bhoktum bhujyate pāpakāraṇāt/ kṣutpratīkārahetuvād yadṛcchāgatabhaktavat//*¹ em. from ‘pāpakāraṇāt)

15) See Alsdorf (2010, 4-6) and Schmithausen (2005, 188-9) for references.

16) *Mahābhārata* 13.115.10ab, “*doṣāṃ tu bhakṣaṇe rājan māṃsasyeha nibodha me!*”; 13.117.12cd, “*bhakṣaṇe tu mahān doṣo vadhena saha kalpate!*”

17) Examples from LAS 8 are too numerous to quote. For one, see Mahāmati’s introductory question: “*deśayatu me bhagavāṃs tathāgato ’rhan samyaksaṃbuddho māṃsabhakṣaṇe guṇadoṣam.*” (LAS 8, 244:2-3)

18) LAS 8, 257, verse 11, “*te yānti paramaṃ ghoram narakam pāpakarmināḥ/ rauravādiṣu raudreṣu pacyante māṃsakhādakāḥ!*”

19) TJ D309a5-6, “Therefore, if one has not seen, heard, or doubted that a living being is killed for the sake of himself/herself, as it is not related to demeritorious mind, it is not to be considered demeritorious to eat such meat in order to cure illness and so forth.” (*’di ltar bdag gi ched du srog chags bsad par rang gis mihong ba yang med, thos pa yang med, dogs pa yang med pa ni, sdig pa’i sems dang bral ba yin pas, nad la sogs pa zhi bar bya ba’i don du de lta bu’i sha zos kyang sdig tu ’gyur bar btag par mi bya ste.*)

determined by the intention of the agent of an action, that is, in this case, the eater.

2. Human body is as impure as meat (MHK 9.134)

The second argument presupposes the opponent's claim that meat is an impure object to eat (*aśucivād abhakṣyam cen māṃsaṃ*). Rather than arguing for the opposite thesis (that is, the purity of meat), Bhāviveka, by pointing out the human body's same degree of impurity, tries to show the absurdity of impure beings calling another object impure (*kāyo 'pi cintyatām*).²⁰⁾ To prove the impurity of the human body, TJ lists thirty-six impure substances—ranging from hair and nails to sleep of the eyes and earwax—from which the human body is made.²¹⁾ TJ further notes the impurity involved in human birth itself, “being posited by impure semen, covered by fluid of excrement and vomit, and then originated from womb,”²²⁾ and rhetorically asks and answers: “How much more impurity would it get by eating meat? Therefore, this [act of eating meat] is nothing whatsoever.”²³⁾

In the *Mahābhārata*'s section on vegetarianism, no anti-meat-eating argument is set forth based on the idea of “impurity of meat.” Nevertheless, a piece of information that Bhāviveka refers to does appear. In a half-verse, it is said, “O son, there is no doubt that meat originated from semen.”²⁴⁾ The condition of the fetus is also described as being under the affliction of pungent amniotic fluid (*ksārāmlakarkaiḥ rasaiḥ*) and contact with the mother's urine, phlegm and excrement (*mūtrasleṣmapurīṣāṇām sparsaiḥ*). However, therein the motif of “impurity” is not mentioned

20) MHK 9.134, “If you argue that meat should not be eaten since it is impure, think of [human] body as well. Since it is supported by the seed [of father] and place [of mother], it is like a impure worm living in excrement.” (*aśucivād abhakṣyam cen māṃsaṃ kāyo 'pi cintyatām/ bījasthānād upastambhād aśucivīṭṭkṛmir¹ yathā//* ¹ em. from *aśucivīṭṭkṛmir*; cf. MHK_L *aśucir vīṭṭkṛmir*.)

21) For the identification of these thirty six impure substances (*mi gtsang ba'i rdzas sum cu rtsa drug*), see Kawasaki 1985, 182:fn.14.

22) TJ D309b4-5, “*mi gtsang ba'i khu bas nye bar bstan cing, phyi sa dang ngan skyugs kyi dangs mas g.yogs nas, mingal gyi nang nas byung ba'i lus 'di ...*”

23) TJ D309b5, “*sha zos pas mi gtsang ba lhag pa ci zhig tu 'gyur? des na 'di ni ci yang ma yin no.*”

24) *Mahābhārata* 13.117.12ab, “*śukrāc ca tāta sambhūtir māṃsasyeha na saṃśayaḥ!*”

at all. Rather, it is warned that those who are desirous of meat (*māmsagrddhin*) would have to suffer the pain of being in the uterus again and again.²⁵⁾

In LAS 8, on the other hand, this “impurity” argument is more clearly enunciated. The idea that meat is a product that originated in the combination of semen (of the father) and blood (of the mother) is first viewed in terms of purity (*śuci*). Then, LAS 8 draws the conclusion that meat is inedible for a *bodhisattva* (*bodhisattvasya māṃsam abhaksyam*).²⁶⁾

3. Argument that fish meat is to be abstained because of its impurity is inconclusive (MHK 9.135)

Though the word “meat” (*māmsa*) is generally considered to encompass fish,²⁷⁾ Bhāviveka separately discusses the same “impurity” argument when applied to the case of fish meat (*matsyamāmsa*). He reports that eating fish meat is censured by some (*vigarhita*) on the score that it originated from semen and blood (*śukrādisambhavāt*). Then, he points out the logical inconsistency involved in employing this argument as milk (*kṣīra*) and butter (*ghṛta*), which the opponent is presumed to have consumed, originated, by the same logic, from semen and blood.²⁸⁾ It is noteworthy that milk and butter, as products of the cow, play the role of the purifier or protector of other foods vulnerable to impurity in Hindu society.²⁹⁾

In the *Mahābhārata*’s section on vegetarianism, no argument is specifically directed against the consumption of fish. The case of fish may have been understood

25) *Mahābhārata* 13.117.28-9.

26) LAS 8, 246:10-1, “*śukraśonitasambhavād api mahāmate! śucikāmatām upādāya bodhisattvasya māṃsam abhaksyam.*”

27) Schmithausen 2005, 183:fn.1.

28) MHK 9.135, “If you revile [the act of eating] fishmeat since that is originated from semen and so forth, because of [examples] such as clarified butter and milk, [your] reason would be inconclusive.” (*śukrādisambhavād eva matsyamāmsaṃ vigarhitam! taṃ ghṛtakṣīrādihetoḥ¹ syād evaṃ vyabhicāritā!*¹ em. from *ghṛtakṣīrādīr hetoḥ*; cf. MHK_L *dhṛtakṣīrādihetoḥ*.)

29) See Dumont 1980, 137-43.

to be a particular case of meat-eating, which needs no individual condemnation. One version of LAS 8 includes, interestingly, specific arguments against fish-eating. The earliest Chinese translation, LAS₄₁₃, has three such arguments: 1) fish meat (魚肉) cannot be obtained without an active effort of the eater;³⁰⁾ 2) it is prohibited by the Buddha;³¹⁾ 3) the Buddha did not eat fish.³²⁾ Other versions of LAS 8 do not have any argument on this specific issue.

4. Argument that eating meat is tantamount to killing a living being is inconclusive (MHK 9.136)

Against this principal argument that meat consumption is inevitably connected with killing living beings (*māṃsādaḥ prāṇighātī*), Bhāviveka does not try to vitiate its logic. Instead, he points out that it is not a proper argument that can be employed by the opponent who carries an animal skin (*ajinādīdhara*).³³⁾ It is because, as TJ elaborates, “if there is no ascetic (*dka' thub*; **tapasvin*) who wears (or carries) a leather, there would be no killing [animals] such as Śarabha.”³⁴⁾ By formulating “no leather without killing” logic against the “no meat without killing,” Bhāviveka

30) LAS₄₁₃ 514a6-8, “Mahāmati! There is no fish meat without one’s instruction (to kill? or to buy?), one’s search, or one’s wish [for fish]. It is because of this reason, one should not eat [fish] meat.” (大慧! 亦無不教不求不想而有魚肉。以是義故, 不應食肉。)

31) LAS₄₁₃ 514a8-10, “Mahāmati! On the other day, I have banned five kinds of meat or prohibited ten kinds. Now, in this sūtra, [I say that], regardless of kind or time, without discriminating any mode [of consumption], every form [of eating meat] is [to be] completely abstained.” (大慧! 我有時說遮五種肉, 或制十種。今於此經, 一切種一切時, 開除方便, 一切悉斷。) Fish is not included in that list of ten prohibited animals, therefore, LAS₄₁₃ 8 is putting a ban on it.

32) LAS₄₁₃ 514a10-2, “Mahāmati! Tathāgata, who is worthy and completely awakened one, does not even eat food; how can he eat fish meat? Nor he instruct others [to eat it]. As he is endowed with great compassion, he views all sentient beings like one and the same son. Therefore, he does not order [others] to eat [one’s own] son’s flesh.” (大慧! 如來應供等正覺尚無所食, 況食魚肉? 亦不教人。以大悲前行故, 視一切衆生猶如一子。是故不聽令食子肉。)

33) MHK 9.136, “If you think the partaker of meat is the killer of a living being for [killing] has that (=meat-eating) as the cause, then your reason would be inconclusive because of [the counter example of] the wearers of leather and the like.” (*māṃsādaḥ prāṇighātī cet tannimittatvato mataḥ/ ajinādīdharair hetoḥ syād evaṃ vyabhicāritā/*)

34) TJ D310a2-3, “*gang pags pa la sogs pa thogs pa'i dka' thub med na, sha ra ba la sogs pa gsod par yang mi 'gyur ro.*”

renders the opponent's argument³⁵⁾ inconclusive: is a meat-eater a killer equivalent to someone who kills for the sake of meat, or is a meat-eater a non-killer like someone (like you) who wears (or carries) an animal skin?³⁶⁾ Thus, Bhāviveka, rather than negating the seemingly valid logic,³⁷⁾ makes use of the opponent's identity as a Brahmanical ascetic one of whose emblems is an animal skin. That is to say, he does not refute the argument per se but merely points out the fact that the argument is held by an unqualified opponent.

The “no meat without killing” argument is employed both in the *Mahābhārata*³⁸⁾ and in LAS 8³⁹⁾.

5. No karmic fault is involved in eating meat since it does not impose pain on a living being (MHK 9.137)

This seems to be another argument to break the general framework of the opponent which connects meat-eating with karmic sin (*see* section 1 above), and this argument presupposes that both parties in the debate concur that imposing pain upon others generates a negative karmic effect.⁴⁰⁾ According to TJ, as there is no sentience in

35) TJ lays out the opponent's argument as it introduces MHK 9.136 at TJ D310a1-2. “If you argue: if there is no meat-eater, there would be no killer. Therefore, one who kills [those animals] is the [meat-]eater. It is like, for the sake of nourishing [oneself and] for the sake of [the taste of] meat, the eater forces [the butcher] to kill [animals].” (*gal te yang* “za ba po med na, gsod pa po yang med par 'gyur bas, des na srog gcod pa ni za ba po nyid yin te. 'tsho bar byed pa'i rgyu mtshan yin pa'i phyir, sha'i phyir, gsod du 'jug pa lta bu'o” zhe na.)

36) TJ D310a3-4, “des na, de ni rgyu mtshan yin pa'i phyir, sha'i phyir gsod par 'jug pa po bzhin du, sha za ba srog gcod pa nyid yin par 'gyur ram? 'on te, de'i rgyu mtshan yin pa'i phyir, pags pa la sogs pa 'chang ba bzhin du, srog gcod pa ma yin pa nyid du 'gyur? zhes bya bas gtan tshigs ma nges pa nyid yin no.”

37) Schmithausen (2005) thinks that this “no meat without killing” argument propounded by LAS 8 is “largely been ignored or even expressly discarded by the conservative strand.” (192) He later opines that this argument nevertheless cannot be simply overlooked especially when the matter is considered “from the angle of the victim.” (195)

38) cf. *Mahābhārata* 13.116.26.

39) cf. LAS 8, 253:10-11. See Schmithausen (2005, 192) and Ham (2019, 142) for assessments on this argument of the *Lañkāvatāra*.

40) MHK 9.137, “[Thesis:] There is no fault in meat-eating, [Reason:] because one does not impose pain on living beings at the time [of eating], [Example:] just as using pearl, perfume, peacock's tail etc., grain, and

meat, eating meat does not make a being suffer; therefore, Bhāviveka retorts, “how can it be a sin?” (*sḍig par lta ga la 'gyur te*).⁴¹⁾ It is because, otherwise, “it would be also sinful to burn a corpse.”⁴²⁾

No argument which condemns meat-eating on this score is found in the *Mahābhārata* “vegetarianism” section whereas it is found in one Chinese translation of LAS 8, that is, in LAS₅₁₃, with reference to the specific “pain of death” (死苦).⁴³⁾ It is argued that there is no difference between men and animals in that they both cherish themselves (各自寶重) and fear the pain of death (畏於死苦). Thus, the Buddha in LAS₅₁₃ advises to Mahāmati, “if you want to eat meat, first reflect on your own body and then observe other sentient beings. [Then] you would, most probably, not eat meat.”⁴⁴⁾

6. Meat-eating does not increase passion (MHK 9.138)

As the last anti-vegetarianism argument, Bhāviveka claims that eating meat is not the reason for the aroused passion (*rāga*) in the eater since even without eating meat passion does arise, as we observe in the example of cows, grass-eaters.⁴⁵⁾ Passion is rather aroused by conceptualization (*saṃkalpaja*), which is the root (*rtsa bar gyur pa*) of all the three poisons, viz. passion, hatred, and delusion.

The *Mahābhārata* has one verse devoted to this theme: “As the scripture prescribes, passion (*rāga*) originates from [meat] eaten just as knowledge of taste arises from tongue.”⁴⁶⁾ Much like the *Mahābhārata*, LAS 8 views “[meat-]eating” as

water.” (*na māṃsabhakṣaṇam duṣṭam tadānīm prāṇyadulhkhānāi/ mukābarhikalāpādītanḍulāmbūpayogavat* //¹ em. from *mukābarhikalāpādī tanḍulāmbūpayogavat*; cf. MHK_v, *mukābarhikalāpādītanḍulāmbūpayogavat*).

41) TJ D310b3-4.

42) TJ D310b5, “*sḍyon yod na ni shi ba'i ro sreg pa yang sḍig pa yod par 'gyur ro*.”

43) See LAS₅₁₃ 562c3-9.

44) LAS₅₁₃ 562c8-9, “欲食肉者, 先自念身, 次觀衆生, 不應食肉.”

45) MHK 9.138, “Meat-eating is not a cause of passion since it (=passion) arises from discrimination. It is because passion arises even without that [=meat-eating] like in [the case of] grass-eating cows.” (*saṃkalpajatvāḍ rāgasya na hetur māṃsabhakṣaṇam/ tad vināpi¹ tadupatter gavām iva tṛṇāsīnam* //¹ em. from *tadvināpi*).

the root cause of passion. However, the process of the origination that LAS 8 suggests is more complex. It is said that from “food” (*āhāra*), obviously denoting meat in the context, arises “arrogance” (*darpa*) and from arrogance “conceptualization” (*saṃkalpa*) is born. Then from conceptualization finally “passion” (*rāga*) comes into being. When this causal chain—viz., the chain of meat-arrogance-conceptualization-passion—is considered, it concludes, one should not eat meat.⁴⁷⁾ After having reiterated that passion originates from conceptualization, LAS 8 furthers this causal chain to show what is ultimately implicated in this process initially provoked by meat-eating. Mind becomes stupefied by passion and a thus stupefied mind becomes attached. As a corollary, one cannot be liberated.⁴⁸⁾

Interestingly, by inserting “conceptualization” as one of the items in the causal chain from meat-eating to passion finally leading up to the impossibility of emancipation, LAS 8 seems to react to Bhāviveka’s diagnosis that conceptualization is the cause of passion. According to LAS 8, conceptualization is indeed the cause of passion, but there is the deeper cause: meat-eating.⁴⁹⁾ Bhāviveka’s thesis, in its turn, seems to be made against the position that meat-eating is the cause of passion held by the *Mahābhārata*.

46) *Mahābhārata* 13.115.11, “*rasam ca prati jihvāyāḥ prajñānam jāyate tathā| tathā śāstreṣu niyataṃ rāgo hy āsvādītād bhavet!*”

47) LAS 8, 257:2-3 (verse 7), “*āhārāj jāyate darpaḥ saṃkalpo darpasambhavaḥ| saṃkalpajanito rāgas tasmād api na bhakṣayet!*”

48) LAS 8, 257:4-5 (verse 8), “*saṃkalpāj jāyate rāgaś cittaṃ rāgeṇa muhyate| mūḍhasya saṃgatir bhavati jāyate na ca mucyate!*” These two verses are commonly—though not identical to each other—found in the verse summary part of the Sanskrit sūtra (LAS 8), LAS₅₁₃ and LAS₇₀₀, but not in LAS₄₄₃.

49) There is one line in LAS₅₁₃ in which meat-eating is directly—without intermediate items—connected with passion. LAS₅₁₃, 562c2, “*Again, Mahāmāti! Meat-eating generates virility [in the eater]. Those who eat tasty food mostly are greedily attached [to sex (?)].*” (復次, 大慧! 食肉能起色力。食味人多貪著。)

V. Conclusion

Given the fact that the materials to which Bhāviveka's opponent refers are mostly found in the *Mahābhārata* (that is, in four out of six issues, except (3) and (5)), Bhāviveka's own framing of this section as a refutation of someone who takes the *Mahābhārata* as scripture appears to be credible. There must have been a Brahmanical renunciant group that advocated the *Mahābhārata*'s section on vegetarianism and, based on it, criticized Buddhists' meat diet.

It is significant that Bhāviveka does not refer to the sentences that sanction sacrificial meat-eating "incoherently scattered" throughout the *Mahābhārata*'s vegetarianism section (Alsdorf 2010, 34). Those words representing the ritualists' vision seem to have been inserted to domesticate the ascetic idea of *ahiṃsā*, which was becoming ever more influential. Bhāviveka's non-reference to those ritualists' position has two implications. First, Bhāviveka is not confronting the *Mahābhārata* but someone who has based his argument on the *Mahābhārata*. If Bhāviveka's opponent was someone who merely repeated the *Mahābhārata*, he would have been quick to point out the inconsistencies between ascetics' and ritualists' vision of meat-eating, as he did right before he commences his anti-vegetarianism arguments. While it seems certain that the *Mahābhārata* provides the source materials, we need to assume that someone has formulated anti-Buddhist diet arguments based on those materials. This is also supported by the fact that there is no concern about Buddhists in the *Mahābhārata* itself. Second, the opponent is an ascetic-oriented thinker and consistently formulated his polemics against the Buddhists from the ascetic point of view. The anti-vegetarianism section of MHK 9 should not be viewed as a document of Buddhist-Mīmāṃsaka debate only because it is in MHK 9, i.e., the chapter devoted to the Mīmāṃsakas.

What is harder to interpret is the correspondence found between the anti-meat-eating arguments of the *Mahābhārata* and LAS 8. Because of the correspondence of the contents between them, though Bhāviveka lists and acknowledges the *Laṅkāvatāra*

as a Mahāyāna sūtra, Bhāviveka's arguments can also be read as a polemic against LAS 8. However, I do not think Bhāviveka was deliberately refuting LAS 8's arguments, even though he might have been conscious of the contradictions between his and LAS 8's arguments since they are so obvious and conspicuous. It is because there are general affinities between Madhyamaka thought and LAS,⁵⁰⁾ Bhāviveka acknowledges the authority of LAS, and does not leave any hint for us to think in that direction.

In sum, Bhāviveka is seen to oppose LAS 8 without intending to do so. And this effect, I speculate, is caused by LAS 8's incorporation of the *Mahābhārata*'s arguments. The *Mahābhārata* predates the *Laṅkāvatāra*. This means that the arguments that LAS 8 wields against fellow Buddhist meat-eaters were already well-known and thus available to the compilers of LAS 8. On top of this, many of LAS 8's reasons for accepting vegetarianism are based on its fear of non-Buddhists' censure of the Buddhist meat diet.⁵¹⁾ What we can infer from these is that LAS 8 is not only afraid of others' censure but is also imitating or reproducing others' arguments. LAS 8's vegetarianism is, by its nature, Hindu. It is doubly Hindu since LAS 8 adopted vegetarianism in reference to the Hindus' censure and in so doing, it embraced the critics' reasoning. Because of its Hindu nature, a Buddhist such as Bhāviveka, when he confronts the Hindus, cannot avoid being appeared to transgress the scripture whose authority is fully acknowledged.

50) See Tucci 1928, 550 and 553 and Lindtner 1992.

51) cf. Ham 2019.

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바비베까의 반-채식주의와 능가경의 양립불가능성

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일반적으로 불교의 승단전통은 채식을 식사의 기본적인 원칙으로 하는 것으로 인식되고 있으나, 기존의 연구들이 지적하고 있듯, 채식주의는 최초의 불교전통에 속하는 것이 아니라 기원후 등장한 몇몇 대승경전에서 처음으로 주장된 것이었다. 불교 채식주의와 관련된 선행연구들은 초기불교전통에서 제한적으로 육식을 허용한 배경과 이를 거부하고 육식에 대한 전면적인 금지를 선포하고 있는 대승경전들의 내용을 포괄적으로 잘 정리하고 있으며, 대승불교도들이 전격적으로 채식 도입한 원인에 대한 설득력 있는 가설을 제시하고 있다.

본 연구는 기존의 연구 성과들을 참조하면서도 그것들이 주목하지 않았던 대승불교 내부의 반-채식주의적 경향성에 대해 조사해본다. 대승불교 전통 내에서 새로이 도입된 채식주의에 대해 전격적으로 반대하는 주장을 펼친 대표적인 예를 6세기에 활동하였던 인도의 중관학파 논사인 바비베까(Bhāviveka, c. 500-570 CE)의 저작 속에서 찾을 수 있다. 바비베까는 그의 대표작 『중관심론』(Madhyamakahrdaya)에서 채식주의를 불필요한 규칙으로 명확하게 규정하고 이에 대한 자신의 의견을 개진하고 있으며, 해당 부분의 개략적인 내용은 가와사키(川崎信定)가 일찍이 소개한 바 있다. 그러나 가와사키는 텍스트에 대한 초벌 번역 정도만을 제시하고 있을 뿐 구체적인 내용분석을 수행하고 있지 않으며, 바비베까가 비판하고 있는 논적의 정체성을 전혀 고려하지 않은 채 불교전통 내에서만 바비베까의 반-채식주의의 의의를 평가하고 있다. 더 나아가 바비베까의 주장과 『능가경』(Laṅkāvatārasūtra) 제 8장 「비(非)육식에 관한 장」(amāṃsabhakṣaṇa)의 내용이 양립가능하다는 그의 판단은 정당하지 않은 것으로 보인다. 본 연구는 보다 넓은 관점에서 바비베까의 반-채식주의를 고찰하여 바비베까의 논의가 그의 의도와 무관하게 『능가경』에 대한 비판으로 읽힐 수 있는 가능성을 제시한다.

주제어

능가경, 바비베키, 인도불교, 중관심론, 채식주의

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