Will Nepal Go Veggie?
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Hari Bansh Jha, Nepal

Hari Singh estimates that 15 per-cent of Nepal's 20 million citizens are vegetarians. Now 52, he has waged a campaign for more than half his life promoting vegetarianism in a kingdom where even the priests eat meat. I first encountered Singh when he lectured at a Rotary Club luncheon in Kathmandu. "By nature," he told the attentive crowd, "human beings are not carnivorous. We are vegetarians. Because of the consumption of bad food and drink, the Nepalese people are showing bad social and moral characteristics. Teachers, administrators, farmers and the other sections of the society are becoming immoral and selfish, all due to the impact of bad food. This inspired me to propagate vegetarianism and pure food."

Singh has held various posts in ministries of His Majesty's Government. He lectures constantly throughout Nepal, distributes pamphlets and does one-on-one conversion attempts with individuals. He calls his efforts modestly successful, particularly among the brahmin and Chhetria communities.

At stake, he feels, is the very future of the country. "Despite the fact that Nepal is the country of Lord Pashupatinath, Lord Buddha, Sita and Bhrikuti, the Nepalese society is not living up to its ideals. It is actually falling. Many people eat the meat of buffalos, goats, sheep and chickens. They drink contaminated water and sometimes toxic home-made alcohol. It is due in part to these problems that we have not been able to produce Noble Peace laureates, eminent scientists, great writers and so forth. For the same reasons, India, too, despite its glorious ancient tradition brought about by Lord Rama, Krishna and recently by Mahatma Gandhi, has witnessed embarrassing opportunism and corruption in public life."

"My message to the Nepalese people," Singh told me, "is that we should stop eating bad food, especially meat, and stop drinking alcohol and contaminated water. Consumption of clean food and pure water will result in physical and mental health, purity of mind and body. Such a change in our food consumption will contribute tremendously to uplift our moral life and overall health of our society. "

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