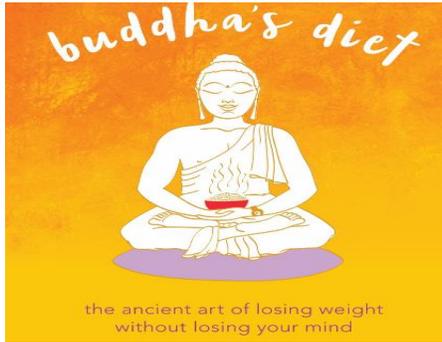


DIETING



DIETING – Buddhist View

As a part of this practice he ate scraps and waste food, including the scum from boiling rice, the solids left after the oil had been extracted from sesame seeds, and grass. However, he also sometimes ate more wholesome food such as a type of rice called daddula and the wild rice now known by botanists as *Oryza rufipogon*.

But first he had to recover his strength and he did this he said, by eating boiled rice and kummàsa. Then as now, rice was boiled in water with a pinch of salt added. Kummàsa was made by boiling various grains and pulses, but particularly Lyon beans and Black Gram, until it became thick and then making it into lumps. We are told that just after attaining enlightenment, two passing merchants saw the Buddha and offered him gruel made from barley meal and honey balls. This too would have been a nutritious and satisfying meal. From then on and until the end of his life, the Buddha ate whatever he was given, whether it was rich and sumptuous or plain and simple.

A common food he often ate was rice gruel which was probably made by boiling rice and water to a thin consistency and adding salt, a garlic clove and a few pepper corns. The Buddha said there were five advantages of this gruel; it dispels hunger, quenches thirst, regulates wind, cleanses the bowels and helps digest the remnants of food. At

other times he ate much richer fare; rice with the black specks removed together with a selection of sauces and curries (M.II,7-8). We are told that on another occasion he was served pork with jujube fruit. The Buddha was once offered a meal of rice gruel cooked with jujube and sesame oil and mixed with pepper, garlic and làmajjaka. Buddha also sometimes ate fruit such as rose-apple, mango, yellow myrobalan and embolic myrobalan. These last two fruits are tart-tasting but rich in vitamins A and C and iron. The Buddha once said that `the body comes into being because of food and is dependent on food. This was as true for enlightened people like himself as it is for everyone else.

To diet is to regulate the amount of food consumed either for medical reasons or to reduce body weight. Once King Pasenadi came to the Buddha bloated and breathing in a labored manner as a result of having eaten yet another enormous meal. Seeing this the Buddha said: `When a person is mindful and thus knows moderation in eating, his ailments diminish, he ages gently and he protects his life.' The king got the hint and asked his nephew to repeat these words to him whenever he was taking his meals. As a result the king gradually reduced his food intake, lost weight and regained his slim.

The value of the Buddha's advice to King Pasenadi Ý to eat with mindfulness (sati) Ý is only beginning to be recognized by dieticians and weight-loss experts. Eating mindfully helps turn a habituated behavior into a conscious one where the possibility of choice is increased. It allows us to pause for a moment, think about and be aware of what we are about to do and why, and often this is enough to bring about a change in behavior. Mindfulness can also allow us to see the urge to eat as it arises and then just watch it with detachment rather than giving in to it. The regular practice of mindfulness of breathing will make it more likely that we will remember to be mindful before and while eating. Something else that can be helpful is to occasionally practice what can

be called 'eating meditation' - eating alone and without haste, focused fully on what we are doing, being aware of the taste of each mouthful, chewing it fully, swallowing it completely before taking the next mouthful, etc. When supplemented with regular exercise and a well-balanced diet, mindful eating is a natural, gentle and effective way to maintain a healthy body weight.

Buddha listed the benefits of losing weight - a reduction of bodily ailments, a slowing of the ageing process and a general enhancement of life - all benefits of a healthy weight and diet confirmed by modern medicine. The Buddha knew that positive reinforcement is often more effective in motivating people.

Christian View on Dieting - Bible Verses

Genesis 1:29 - And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which [is] upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

Ephesians 5:18 - And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

Deuteronomy 8:8 - A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

John 6:35 - And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Ezekiel 4:9 - Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.

What Would Jesus Eat? what it would have been like to dine with Jesus. There were a variety of foods available in the Holy Land. Chief crops were wheat, barley, olives, grapes; legumes such as lentils, fava beans, chickpeas; and vegetables such as onions, leeks, and garlic. Life was also made sweeter with fruits such as olives, grapes, date palms, apples, watermelon, pomegranates, figs, and sycamores (a low-quality fig eaten mainly by the poor). The people also raised sheep, goats, and cattle, and fished from the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee. Wine from the grapes was the main beverage.⁰

Each day began with a light breakfast of bread or a piece of fruit. Bread was kneaded and baked every day, one of the mother's main chores. At midday, those in the Holy Land would eat a light lunch of bread, grain, olives, and figs.

The main meal was eaten at the end of the day. Dinner was a one-pot stew served in a common bowl. Bread was used to spoon the stew. The stew might be a thick porridge of vegetables, lentils, or chickpeas spiced with herbs. Meat was only served occasionally, fish more often, mostly when the family had an important guest. Among the wealthy, lamb or calves were kept in stalls so they could be fattened for feasting (Luke 15: 23–30).

Meals were a sacred time when God's presence was awaited and welcomed in every meal. The people recognized that although they had earned their daily bread, God still gave them all they had. Fellowship in a meal was always fellowship before God.

Confucius's Rules on Diet and Food

Confucius treated his diet with fastidious care and had set out detailed guidelines for food and diet in his teachings. Some of the rules and

principles set by Confucius in relation to food and diet are outlined below.

Freshness of food

According to Confucius, the prime emphasis concerning food is freshness. We must never consume food that is not fresh, and we know that the food is not fresh if they: Have rotted or turn stale Smell bad or have changed in color. They are not in season or has been preserved. Have been cooked much earlier before eating. Are overcooked or badly handled. Reheated, damaged by heat or stored in damp place. Are meat that have been kept for more than 3 days.

Food and its preparations

Fresh food must then be properly prepared and cooked to be beneficial to the human body. Confucius taught that badly handled food will lose its function and may even be harmful for the body. So we should pay close attention to the entire process from where we obtain food to how we cook the food. What is proper preparation? It is simple yet refined. Simple means that the food does not have to be extravagant or luxurious, and refined means that the food should be of good quality and fresh, as well as properly cleaned and cut. Confucius suggested that we eat good quality rice as and when possible, and all meat must be either minced or cut into small pieces so that it is easier to be digested. In addition, different food must be cooked differently to retain its benefits (or in modern term, nutrition).

Amount and proportions

As with modern dieticians, Confucius advocated for a moderate and balanced diet. He told us to never eat too much, and should be especially mindful not to overindulge during festive seasons. In regard to proportion, this is what Confucius said: A balanced diet should consist of rice, meat and vegetables. Rice must be the staple

and make up the largest proportion of the meal. Meat is nutritional but hard on the digestive system, so it should be taken in reasonable amount. Vegetables are great supplements, but must never replace the first two. Our meals should consist of a variety of colors and tastes, and have an inviting in aroma.

Digestive aids

Confucius also gave his disciples useful tips like eating a small amount of ginger prior to meals to remove excessive wind and dampness in the stomach. From the Traditional Chinese Medicine or TCM point of view, wind in the stomach causes bloating, and dampness slows the metabolic rate of the body. Reducing the two would help to alleviate the digestive problems related to them. In addition, ginger helps to improve our appetite and aids digestions.

Wine

The only criterion that Confucius prescribed in relation to wine is that it must not be brought from unwholesome places, where it is made. This would mean that wine should be either homemade or purchased from places where we could be sure of its quality. Confucius did not recommend the amount of wine to be consumed. Perhaps, he understood that the alcohol tolerance level varied among individuals. Wine in the ancient time was highly nutritional and beneficial, so he said that we could drink as much wine as we like as long as it does not affect the stability of our minds. These rules may not be groundbreaking for us, in light of modern food science, but to think that Confucius who lived more than 2500 years ago could derive all these understandings merely through observations and contemplations is awe-inspiring.