

Buddhist attitudes towards animal sacrifice

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Animals are a part of the natural environment. However humans' cruelty to animals has become a serious concern in the contemporary world. On the other hand, animal sacrifices are well-known in the world. All major religions of the world praise creation and acknowledge that humankind depends on nature for its own survival. They also teach compassion and love of all living creatures. Nearly all religions recognize the inherent value of animal life and the need to avoid animal suffering. However, many religions have traditionally involved animal sacrifices, and some still do this. Buddhism is based upon a universal idea of compassion for all life. The Buddhist faith also teaches that sentient beings are subject to rebirth as other sentient beings, and that consciousness cannot be killed. Thus, there is a disconnectedness of all living beings. The first of the Five Precepts, which are the foundation of Buddhist ethical conduct, is not to harm sentient beings. Thus it is vital that we should take steps to eliminate animal cruelty in the light of Buddhism which promotes love, compassion and non-violence (ahimsa). According to the statistics released by the United Nations, in every week more than one billion animals are being killed around the world for human consumption and this excludes animals that are being killed for sacrifices and those who are being hunted down. 'Tripitaka' contains a plethora of teachings which promote non-violence and compassion towards animals as the very basis of Buddhism is about spreading love and compassion. Thus the objective of this endeavor is to unearth the Buddhist teachings of non-violence and establish how effective and contribute they are in terms formulating policies in view of protecting animal rights.

Keywords: Animals, Rights, Sacrifices, Religions, Buddhism