

This is discourse on Buddha—whether he was Magar or not, and whether he died of eating pork or not....The dialogues started with the email from GP..Thapa and it continues still today.....

Dear Punji,

It was interesting to listen to some of the deliberations in the opening of the training camp for Magars. I was particularly surprised to know what MS Thapa said about the death of Buddha out of eating sungur ko masu. I do not know its truth but in one of the book "The Key of Immediate Enlightenment" Published by Master Ching Hai, page 75-76, it is clearly written that "Buddha and his disciples all kept a vegetarian diet. However, some people slandered Buddha by saying that he was a convenient vegetarian, and that if alms-givers gave meat, he ate meat. This is truly nonsense. Those who say so have read too little of the Scriptures, or don't understand the Scriptures they have read."

Furthermore the writer answers one of the question that whether Buddha died out of diarrhea due to eating pig's foot. The answer is "Absolutely not. It was because of eating a kind of mushroom that Buddha died. If we translate directly from the language of the Brahmins, this kind of mushroom is called the 'pigs foot', but it is not a real pig's foot. It's like when we call a kind of fruit 'longan' (in Chinese it literally means the 'dragons eye'). This mushroom in Brahmanic language is called 'pig's foot' or 'pig's joy'. Both have a connection with pigs. This kind of mushroom was not easy to find in ancient India and was a rare delicacy, so people offered it to Buddha in worship. This mushroom cannot be found above the ground. If people want to find it they must search with the help of an old pig which likes very much to eat this kind of mushroom. Pigs detect it by their smell, and when they discover one, they use their feet to dig in the mud to find and eat it. That was why this kind of mushroom is called the 'pig's foot' or ' pig's joy'. Actually these two names refer to this mushroom. Because it was translated carelessly and because people did not truly understand the derivation, the following generations have been caused to misunderstand and mistake Buddha for a flesh devouring man. This is really regrettable thing."

At this time, I do not know anything about the truth of all this, but I think people are making comments and showing alignment of out of shallow study.

What did other speakers talk about. I dont know how to deliver a copy of it to Zedi who will further give it to MS Thapa. Please help delivery who is near to Zedi or in close contact with him. With regards.

GPTHAPA

Dec 10, 2000

Dear DIG GP Thapaji,

Thank you for your very interesting email on the interpretation of Buddha eating the “pig’s foot” by the Chinese writer Ching Hai, in his book “The Key of Immediate Enlightenment.” It was really a revelation for me and particularly when such controversial issues are dissected by the third party i.e. not by someone from the South Asian region. While on the subject of Buddha, I would like to share the following two issues that struck me while I was reading the book, “The Teaching of Buddha” copyrighted by Bukkyo Dendo Kyoki, a Japanese Buddhist Promotion Foundation.

i. “The Queen’s name was Maya. She was the daughter of the King’s uncle who was also the king of the neighboring district of the same Shakya clan.” This apparently indicates that the king married his “mama’s” daughter. Buddha has been referred to as the Rajput prince meaning the

Chetri clan. But no Chetris marry “mama’s” daughter as they term it incestuous! The book continues, “According to their custom the Queen returned to her parent’s home for the birth, and on her way, in the beautiful spring sunshine, she took a rest in the Lumbini Garden.” I feel these are the very valuable insights and the Magar Sangh needs to do thorough in depth studies before arriving at a ‘convenient’ conclusion.

ii. On the Buddha’s death, the same book says, “But when he was eighty, at Vaisali and on his way from Rajgriha to Shravasti, he became ill and predicted that after three months he would enter Nirvana. Still he journeyed on until he reached Pava where he fell seriously ill from some food offered by Chunda, a blacksmith. Eventually, in spite of great pain and weakness, he reached the forest that bordered Kusinagara.”

There are good foods for thought for all of us. I am sorry for the slow Magar response to your email! Warm regards,
SB Pun

Dec 22, 2000

Dear Mr. G. P. Thapa,

First of all I want to thank you for your comment on my speech in the opening session of the training for Magars. I am very glad that our Magars are taking interest in Buddhism and have started to dialogue and take part in discussion. I hope it will enrich our knowledge about Buddhism.

You have, as I mentioned understood, pointed that:

1. Buddha did not eat pork (sungurko masu) and
2. Buddha are the mushroom which cannot be found above the ground

For the first argument,

1. This Pali word “sukur maddava (skt. Sukar marddava)” is main bone of contention and non-sthavira schools are reluctant to accept Pali word “sukur maddava” for “Pork” because some Asian people consider pig as substandard animal and feels shame to write that their devoted one had ever eaten pork. It is very important to notice that Japanese Buddhism is based on Zenism with Sin-tu religion of Japan. The word ‘Zen’ derived from Chinese ‘Sen’ and ‘Sen’ is Pali version of Jhhen (skt=Dhyan). This school of Buddhism is especially devoted to bodhisttava)The coming Buddha), not to the historical Buddha. They consider Buddha as super human and as well as most devoted God. They will never dare accept that their devoted one, the super God Buddha had ever eaten such a substandard meat, pork. So they always advocate and plead that the Buddha was a vegetarian. They consider Tripitakas just supposed to be read. The book you referred is not unnoticed by me. But the sthavira school of Buddhism believes Buddha as a historical learned man, the enlightened one and the light of Asia. This school of Buddhism is based on Tripitaka. Your argument of my deliberation is also based on Tripitakas. Now let us see the explanation of “sukur maddava”:

1. ‘(sukar) maddava’ means mild, gentle and delicious (pork). (Pali-English dictionary, 1889, London. Edited by Rhys Davids)
2. The Udanatthakatha refereeing to Maha atthakatha explains “sukurassa mridusinidham pavattamangsasanti mahatthakathayam vuttam” in Maha atthakatha it is said that the mild and suave pork meat is called “sukur maddava”
3. Dighanikaya atthakatha 1 p. 395 mahaprinibbanasuttavanana explains “natitarunassa natijinanassa ekjetthasukarassa pavattamansam. Tam kira mu mudunchev sinidham

- ca hoti. Tam patiyadapetva sadhukam pacapetvati attho..” “Sukur maddava means that meat of neither too young nor too old pig. It is delicious and suave.”
4. The famous research scholar Mr. H. Kern has stated, “The Buddha himself is represented as eating the pork expressly prepared for him by Cunda.”-Manual of Indian Buddhism, 1898, p. 84
 5. “Uhanle (Buddha) chunda namak sunarko gharma sungurko masu khanu bhayao.”-Prakash Bajracharya, Buddha ra Buddha Pachhi, 2048, p. 52
 6. “Chund kamarputrale afnogharma..pryapta matrama sungurko masu pani tayar parna lagai bhagvanlai sayako schana dina pathaye”-Dunda Bahadur Bajracharya-Dighanikaya, p. 264, 2056
- According to Pali text there is no ambiguous meaning of ‘sukur maddava.’ It is clearly stated that Buddha ate the pork. Hence so many examples can be given from the Tripitakas and also from foreign research scholars.

For the second argument,

1. I want to remind that the mushroom do not grow in the month of Baisakh-the month Buddha demised. It grows in the month of Ashar and Sravan-the rainy season.
2. Even to this day, the civilized world does not know that mushroom grow under the ground. We know that pig uses their front part of nose to dig the ground instead of legs. Even, other than Mr. Ching Hai, no other research scholars have mentioned the names of mushroom like “pig’s foot” or ‘pig’s joy” and nobody knows or heard like these names even in the earliest extant manuscripts of Tripitakas.
3. I think Mr. Ching Hai mistook “Sukur maddava” for “kukur mutta” a brahmanic (skt) word for mushroom. It is surprise to note that Mr. Ching Hai has not mentioned the real Pali or Sanskrit version of PIG or MUSHROOM. He only mentions Buddha as a vegetarian and charges other scholars of a little knowledge.
4. Although some foreign scholars have interpreted the word ‘sukar” as a kind of chemical, a just gron delicate bamboo (Pali-vanskalir, Nepali-Tama, magar-Churgan), mushroom (Magar-mhugan) and Sakarkanda (Hiindi-chukandar, Magar-Chakre name) but all these interpretations of the word “sukar” are hypothetical due to lack of language problems. If we supposed the word “sukar” for sakarkanda, it is sown in the rainy season and harvested within the month of Phagun. The taste of sakarkanda is sweet and never suitable to use as vegetable. As stated above, mushrooms, whatever its varieties, are to found only in rainy season-not in the dry season like Baishakh. The other brahmanical (skt) word for pig is ‘Vraha”. The Pali word for the Pig is Sukar. Hence from every point of view it is not empirical to suppose or interpret the word “Sukar” other than the “PIG.”
5. All the sources of Tripitakas confirmed that Buddha ate the pork in the month of Baishakh, the hot summer day in which month it is very hard to digest like pork, and the feebled Buddha demised out of diarrhea.
6. The authentic books about these contentions are Tripitakas and before making any hasty and novice comments it sis suggested to everyone to study above mentioned books. I hope my *shallow study* will inspire to go ahead. With thanks and awaiting response.
M.S. Thapa Magar, zhedi@enet.com.np

Dec 23, 2000

Dear MS Thapaji,

Namaste. I thank you for the email about the death of Buddha and other references. As I earlier said that I am not sure about the facts, your study (your book) has tried to find out the facts. I think that the research should be further down to the depth of facts. I wonder whether or not we had our dharma before Buddhism. If we had one, why not follow the same? Why should we adopt anyone's dharma. I shall be in touch with you after sometime. I shall find some time to go through your books and other materials published in this connection. These days I am quite busy with thesis. Let me finish this. Any way it is interesting to know that some discourse is on the way to explore the facts. I appreciate your efforts and devotion. Please keep it up. I think this is not the end of the journey. With best regards.

Gpthapa

After going through Mr. MS Thapa's comments on my email pertaining to Chiang Hai's opinion, I went further inside the internet. It has been very interesting to go through the literatures available at different source about the death of Buddha. Mr Thapa has claimed that the death of Buddha was the meat of boar. But there are numerous examples of opinions, which do not support his claim. It is not "How did Buddha die?", which is important today but "Whether he was a Magar or not?" is more relevant. These issues are more related to history. Our concerns should be about the futures. Even then, for the benefit of our dear researchers (those who may be interested in) I hereby quote the various examples to illustrate both the opinions on the Buddha's death debate. I hope this will help you decide on the issue and it might encourage many of us to dig into the debate more and more. Happy reading!

The two questions and answers contained in the book "The Key of Immediate Enlightenment" Published by Master Ching Hai, page 74-76, for reference and further research.

Question-

Is it all right just to be a so-called "convenient vegetarian"? (Convenient vegetarians do not strictly avoid meat. They would eat vegetables out of a mixed vegetable and meat dish.)

Answer-

"No. For example, if food is put into a poisonous liquid and then removed, do you think it will become poisonous or not? In the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, Mahakasyapa asked Buddha, "When we beg and are given vegetables mixed with meat, can we eat this food? How can we clean the food?" Buddha replied, "One should clean it with water and separate the vegetables from the meat, then one can eat it." From the above dialogue we can understand that one can not even eat vegetables which are mixed with meat unless one first cleans them with water, not to mention eating meat alone! Therefore, it is very easy to see that Buddha and His disciples all kept to vegetarian diet. However, some people slandered Buddha by saying that He was a "convenient vegetarian", and that if alms-givers gave meat, He ate meat. This is truly nonsense. Those who say so have read too little of the Scriptures, or don't understand the Scriptures they have read. In India, over ninety percent of the people are vegetarians. When people see mendicants in yellow robes they all know they should offer them vegetarian food, not to mention that most of all the people have no meat to give anyway."

Question-

A long time ago, I hear another master say, "Buddha ate a pig's foot and then got diarrhea and died." Is this true?

Answer-

"Absolutely not. It was because of eating a kind of mushroom that Buddha died. If we translate directly from the language of the Brahmans, this kind of mushroom is called the 'pigs foot', but it is not a real pig's foot. It's like when we call a kind of fruit 'longan' (in Chinese it literally means the 'dragons eye'). This mushroom in Brahmanic language is called 'pig's foot' or 'pig's joy'. Both have a connection with pigs. This kind of mushroom was not easy to find in ancient India and was a rare delicacy, so people offered it to Buddha in worship. This mushroom can not be found above the ground. If people want to find it they must search with the help of an old pig which likes very much to eat this kind of mushroom. Pigs detect it by their smell, and when they discover one, they use their feet to dig in the mud to find and eat it. That was why this kind of mushroom is called the 'pig's foot' or 'pig's joy'. Actually these two names refer to the same mushroom. Because it was translated carelessly and because people did not truly understand the derivation, the following generations have been caused to misunderstand and mistake Buddha for a flesh devouring man. This is regrettable thing."

An excerpt from [The Buddha's Life](#), by Gerald Roscoe. Chapter Thirteen, Old age, Illness, and Death

When the Buddha arrived at Pava, on what was to be the last day of his life, he stayed in the mango grove of a smith named Cunda, who prepared for him a meal of "hard and soft food" and a serving of sukaramaddava. Scholars have been unable to agree on the precise meaning of sukaramaddava, some believing that it means soft food of a pig, others that it means soft food given to a pig, mushrooms. Whatever the food may have been, it made the Buddha dreadfully ill, causing blood to flow from him and violent pains to assail him.

They travelled on to Pava where they were received by Cunda the goldsmith who invited them for a meal the next day. A special dish was prepared (some say pork, or mushrooms) and the Buddha instructed that it only be offered to him and the rest buried. Shortly after he took violently ill. They left for Kusinara; he announced he would die that night but made it clear that Cunda had made great merit by offering the last meal. Ananda weeps as he has not yet attained enlightenment. <http://www.abm.ndirect.co.uk/leftside/artty/requiz/b-finale.htm>

[BuddhaSasana Home Page](#)
[English Section](#)

[How the Buddha died](#)

Venerable Dr Mettanando Bhikkhu

Bangkok Post, May 15, 2001

During Wesak Day, we are informed that it is also the day Buddha attained Parinibbana. But not many know how the Buddha died. Ancient texts weave two

stories about the Lord Buddha's death. Was it planned and willed by the Buddha, or was it food poisoning, or something else altogether? Here's an account

The Mahaparinibbana Sutta, from the Long Discourse of Pali Tipitaka, is without doubt the most reliable source for details on the death of Siddhattha Gotama (BCE 563-483), the Lord Buddha. It is composed in a narrative style that allows readers to follow the story of the last days of the Buddha, beginning a few months before he died.

To understand what really happened to the Buddha is not a simple matter, though. The sutta, or discourse, paints two conflicting personalities of the Buddha, one overriding the other.

The first personality was that of a miracle worker who beamed himself and his entourage of monks across the Ganges River (D II, 89), who had a divine vision of the settlement of gods on earth (D II, 87), who could live until the end of the world on condition that someone invite him to do so (D II, 103), who determined the time of his own death (D II, 105), and whose death was glorified by the shower of heavenly flowers and sandal powder and divine music (D II, 138).

The other personality was that of an aged being who was failing in health (D II, 120), who almost lost his life because of a severe pain during his last retreat at Vesali (D II, 100), and who was forced to come to terms with his unexpected illness and death after consuming a special cuisine offered by his generous host.

These two personalities take turns emerging in different parts of the narrative. Moreover, there also appear to be two explanations of the Buddha's cause of death: One is that the Buddha died because his attendant, Ananda, failed to invite him to live on to the age of the world or even longer (D II, 117). The other is that he died by a sudden illness which began after he ate what is known as "Sukaramaddava" (D II, 127-157).

The former story was probably a legend, or the result of a political struggle within the Buddhist community during a stage of transition, whereas the latter sounds more realistic and accurate in describing a real life situation that happened in the Buddha's last days.

A number of studies have focused on the nature of the special cuisine that the Buddha ate during his last meal as being the agent of his death. However, there is also another approach based on the description of the symptoms and signs given in the sutta, which modern medical knowledge can shed light on.

In another mural painting at Wat Ratchasittharam, the Lord Buddha is approaching death, but he still takes time to answer questions put forth by the ascetic Subhadda, his last convert who, after being admitted to the Buddhist Order, became an arahant (enlightened monk).

What we know

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, we are told that the Buddha became ill suddenly after he ate a special delicacy, Sukaramaddava, literally translated as "soft pork", which had been prepared by his generous host, Cunda Kammaraputta. The name of the cuisine has attracted the attention of many scholars, and it has been the focus of academic research on the nature of the meal or ingredients used in the cooking of this special dish.

The sutta itself provides details concerning the signs and symptoms of his illness in addition to some reliable information about his circumstances over the previous four months, and these details are also medically significant.

The sutta begins with King Ajatasattus' plot to conquer a rival state, Vajji. The Buddha had journeyed to Vajji to enter his last rainy-season retreat. It was during this retreat that he fell ill. The symptoms of the illness were sudden, severe pain.

However, the sutta provides no description of the location and character of his pain. It mentions his illness briefly, and says that the pain was intense, and almost killed him.

Subsequently, the Buddha was visited by Mara, the God of Death, who invited him to pass away. The Buddha did not accept the invitation right away. It was only after Ananda, his attendant, failed to recognise his hint for an invitation to remain that he died. This piece of the message, though tied up with myth and supernaturalism, gives us some medically significant information. When the sutta was composed, its author was under the impression that the Buddha died, not because of the food he ate, but because he already had an underlying illness that was serious and acute-and had the same symptoms of the disease that finally killed him.

The Timing

Theravada Buddhist tradition has adhered to the assumption that the historical Buddha passed away during the night of the full moon in the lunar month of Visakha (which falls sometime in May to June). But the timing contradicts information given in the sutta, which states clearly that the Buddha died soon after the rainy-season retreat, most likely during the autumn or mid-winter, that is, November to January.

A description of the miracle of the unseasonal blooming of leaves and flowers on the sala trees, when the Buddha was laid down between them, indicates the time frame given in the sutta.

Autumn and winter, however, are seasons that are not favourable for the growth of mushrooms, which some scholars believe to be the source of the poison that the Buddha ate during his last meal.

Diagnosis

The sutta tells us that the Buddha felt ill immediately after eating the Sukaramaddava. Since we do not know anything about the nature of this food, it is difficult to name it as the direct cause of the Buddha's illness. But from the descriptions given, the onset of the illness was quick.

While eating, he felt there was something wrong with the food and he suggested his host have the food buried. Soon afterward, he suffered severe stomach pain and passed blood from his rectum.

We can reasonably assume that the illness started while he was having his meal, making him think there was something wrong with the unfamiliar delicacy. Out of his compassion for others, he had it buried.

Was food poisoning the cause of the illness? It seems unlikely. The symptoms described do not indicate food poisoning, which can be very acute, but would hardly cause diarrhoea with blood. Usually, food poisoning caused by bacteria does not manifest itself immediately, but takes an incubation period of two to 12 hours to manifest itself, normally with acute diarrhoea and vomiting, but not the passage of blood.

Another possibility is chemical poisoning, which also has an immediate effect, but it is unusual for chemical poisoning to cause severe intestinal bleeding. Food poisoning with immediate intestinal bleeding could only have been caused by corrosive chemicals such as strong acids, which can easily lead to immediate illness. But corrosive chemicals should have caused bleeding in the upper intestinal tract, leading to vomiting blood. None of these severe signs are mentioned in the text.

Peptic ulcer diseases can be excluded from the list of possible illnesses as well. In spite of the fact that their onset is immediate, they are seldom accompanied by bloody stool. A gastric ulcer with intestinal bleeding produces black stool when the ulcer penetrates a blood vessel. An ulcer higher up in the digestive tract would be more likely to manifest itself as bloody vomiting, not a passage of blood through the rectum.

Other evidence against this possibility is that a patient with a large gastric ulcer usually does not have an appetite. By accepting the invitation for lunch with the host, we can assume that the Buddha felt as healthy as any man in his early 80s would feel. Given his age we cannot rule out that the Buddha did not have a chronic disease, such as cancer or tuberculosis or a tropical infection such as dysentery or typhoid, which could have been quite common in the Buddha's time.

These diseases could produce bleeding of the lower intestine, depending on their location. They also agree with the history of his earlier illness during the retreat. But they can be ruled out, since they are usually accompanied by other symptoms, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, weight loss, growth or mass in the abdomen. None of these symptoms were mentioned in the sutta.

A large haemorrhoid can cause severe rectal bleeding, but it is unlikely that a haemorrhoid could cause severe abdominal pain unless it is strangulated. But then it would have greatly disturbed the walking of the Buddha to the house of his host, and rarely is haemorrhoid bleeding triggered by a meal.

Mesenteric infarction

A disease that matches the described symptoms-accompanied by acute abdominal pain and the passage of blood, commonly found among elderly people, and triggered by a meal-is mesenteric infarction, caused by an obstruction of the blood vessels of the mesentery. It is lethal. Acute mesenteric ischaemia (a reduction in the blood supply to the mesentery) is a grave condition with a high rate of mortality.

The mesentery is a part of the intestinal wall that binds the whole intestinal tract to the abdominal cavity. An infarction of the vessels of the mesentery normally causes the death of the tissue in a large section of the intestinal tract, which results in a laceration of the intestinal wall. This normally produces severe pain in the abdomen and the passage of blood. The patient usually dies of acute blood loss. This condition matches the information given in the sutta. It is also confirmed later when the Buddha asked Ananda to fetch some water for him to drink, indicating intense thirst.

As the story goes, Ananda refused, as he saw no source for clean water. He argued with the Buddha that the nearby stream had been muddied by a large caravan of carts. But the Buddha insisted he fetch water anyway.

A question arises at this point: Why did the Buddha not go to the water himself, instead of pressing his unwilling attendant to do so? The answer is simple. The Buddha was suffering from shock caused by severe blood loss. He could no longer walk, and from then to his death bed he was most likely carried on a stretcher.

If this was indeed the situation, the sutta remains silent about the Buddha's travelling to his deathbed, possibly because the author felt that it would be an embarrassment for the Buddha. Geographically, we know that the distance between the place believed to be the house of Cunda and the place where the Buddha died was about 15 to 20 kilometres. It is not possible for a patient with such a grave illness to walk such a distance.

More likely, what happened was that the Buddha was carried on a stretcher by a group of monks to Kusinara (Kushinagara).

It remains a point of debate whether the Buddha really determined to pass away at this city, presumably not much larger than a town. From the direction of the Buddha's journey, given in the sutta, he was moving north from Rajagaha. It is possible that he did not intend to die there, but in the town where he was born, which would have taken a period of three months to reach.

From the sutta, it is clear that the Buddha was not anticipating his sudden illness, or else he would not have accepted the invitation of his host. Kusinara was probably the nearest town where he could find a doctor to take care of him. It is not difficult to see a group of monks hurriedly carrying the Buddha on a stretcher to the nearest town to save his life.

Before passing away, the Buddha told Ananda that Cunda was not to be blamed and that his death was not caused by eating Sukaramaddava. The statement is significant. The meal was not the direct cause of his death. The Buddha knew that the symptom was a repeat of an experience he'd had a few months earlier, the one which had almost killed him.

Sukaramaddava, no matter the ingredients or how it was cooked, was not the direct cause of his sudden illness.

Progression of the disease

Mesenteric infarction is a disease commonly found among elderly people, caused by the obstruction of the main artery that supplies the middle section of the bowel-the small intestine-with blood. The most common cause of the obstruction is the degeneration of the wall of the blood vessel, the superior mesenteric artery, causing severe abdominal pain, also known as abdominal angina.

Normally, the pain is triggered by a large meal, which requires a higher flow of blood to the digestive tract. As the obstruction persists, the bowel is deprived of its blood supply, which subsequently leads to an infarction, or gangrene, of a section of the intestinal tract. This in turn results in a laceration of the intestinal wall, profuse bleeding into the intestinal tract, and then bloody diarrhoea.

The disease gets worse as the liquid and content of the intestine oozes out into the peritoneal cavity, causing peritonitis or inflammation of the abdominal walls. This is already a lethal condition for the patient, who often dies due to the loss of blood and other fluid. If it is not corrected by surgery, the disease often progresses to septic shock due to bacterial toxins infiltrating the blood stream.

Retrospective analysis

From the diagnosis given above, we can be rather certain that the Buddha suffered from mesenteric infarction caused by an occlusion of the superior mesenteric artery. This was the cause of the pain that almost killed him a few months earlier during his last rainy-season retreat. With the progress of the illness, some of the mucosal lining of his intestine sloughed off, and this site became the origin of the bleeding. Arteriosclerosis, the hardening of the vessel wall caused by ageing, was the cause of the arterial occlusion, a small blockage that did not result in bloody diarrhoea, but is a symptom, also known to us as abdominal angina.

He had his second attack while he was eating the Sukaramaddava. The pain was probably not intense in the beginning, but made him feel that there was something wrong. Suspicious about the nature of the food, he asked his host to have it all buried, so that others might not suffer from it.

Soon, the Buddha realised that the illness was serious, with the passage of blood and more severe pain in his abdomen. Due to the loss of blood, he went into shock. The degree of dehydration was so severe that he could not maintain himself any longer and he had to take shelter at a tree along the way.

Feeling very thirsty and exhausted, he got Ananda to collect water for him to drink, even though he knew that the water was muddied. It was there that he collapsed until his entourage carried him to the nearest town, Kusinara, where there would have been a chance of finding a doctor or lodging for him to recover in.

It was probably true that the Buddha got better after drinking to replace his fluid loss, and resting on the stretcher. The experience with the symptoms told him that his sudden illness was the second attack of an existing disease. He told Ananda that the meal was not the cause of his illness, and that Cunda was not to blame.

A patient with shock, dehydration and profuse blood loss usually feels very cold. This was the reason why he told his attendant to prepare a bed using four sheets of ifsanghati nf. According to Buddhist monastic discipline, a ifsanghati nfis a cloak, or extra piece of robe, very large, the size of a bed sheet, which the Buddha allowed monks and nuns to wear in winter.

This information reflects how cold the Buddha felt because of his loss of blood. Clinically, it is not possible for a patient who is in a state of shock with severe abdominal pain, most likely peritonitis, pale and shivering, to be ambulatory.

The Buddha was most likely put into a lodging, where he was nursed and warmed, located in the city of Kusinara. This view is also confirmed with the description of Ananda who, weeping, swoons and holds onto the door of his lodge after learning that the Buddha was about to pass away.

Normally, a patient with mesenteric infarction could live 10 to 20 hours. From the sutta we learn that the Buddha died about 15 to 18 hours after the attack. During that time, his attendants would have tried their best to comfort him, for example, by warming the room where he was resting, or by dripping some water into his mouth to quench his lingering thirst, or by giving him some herbal drinks. But it would be highly unlikely that a shivering patient would need someone to fan him as is described in the sutta.

Off and on, he may have recovered from a state of exhaustion, allowing him to continue his dialogues with a few people. Most of his last words could have been true, and they were memorised by generations of monks until they were transcribed. But finally, late into the night, the Buddha died during a second wave of septic shock. His illness stemmed from natural causes coupled with his age, just as it would for anyone else.

Conclusion

The hypothesis outlined above explains several scenes in the narrative of the sutta, namely, the pressuring of Ananda to fetch water, the Buddha's request for a fourfold cloak for his bed, the ordering of the meal to be buried, and so on.

It also reveals another possibility of the actual means of transportation of the Buddha to Kusinara and the site of his death bed. Sukaramaddava, whatever its nature, was unlikely to have been the direct cause of his illness. The Buddha did not die by food poisoning. Rather, it was the size of the meal, relatively too large for his already troubled digestive tract, that triggered the second attack of mesenteric infarction that brought an end to his life./.

Dr Mettanando Bhikkhu was a physician before entering the monkhood. He is currently based at Wat Raja Orasaram, Thailand.

<http://www.saigon.com/~anson/ebud/ebdha192.htm>

And the Blessed One went to Pava. [1]

When Chunda, the worker in metals,
heard that the Blessed One had come to Pava

and was staying in his mango grove,
he came to the Buddha
and respectfully invited him and the brethren
to take their meal at his house.
And Chunda prepared rice-cakes
and a dish of dried boar's meat. [2]

When the Blessed One had eaten the food prepared by Chunda, the worker in metals,
there fell upon him a dire sickness, and sharp pain came upon him even unto death.
But the Blessed One, mindful and self-possessed, bore it without complaint. [3]

Source: http://www.magna.com.au/~prfbrown/buddha/carus_95.htm

How Did the Buddha Die? By Binh Anson

The Buddha died of old age, when he was eighty years old. The death was triggered by his body reaction to a dish of wild mushroom. He died peacefully and mindfully.

In order to know the last day of the Buddha, we should read books on his life or better still, read the recorded Suttas. The best source is the Maha Parinibbána Sutta (Kinh Dda.i Ba't Nie^t Ba`n) from the Pali collection of the Digha Nikaya (Tru+o+`ng Bo^ . Kinh), or the Wandering Sutra (Kinh Du Ha`nh) from the Sanskrit/Chinese collection of the Digha Agama (Tru+o+`ng A Ha`m). There is a separate Chinese sutra, The Maha Parinirvana Sutra, which was also translated into Vietnamese, but this script has been widely regarded as being composed at a very late stage (about 200-400 C.E.).

References

In English:

[1] Last Days of the Buddha - The Maha Parinibbána Sutta, 1988. Sister Vajira and Francis Story. Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka.

[2] Thus I have heard - The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Digha Nikáya), 1987. Maurice Walshe. Wisdom Publication, USA.

[3] The Buddha and his teachings, 1980. Narada Mahathera. Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka (Ddu+'c Pha^.t va` Pha^.t Pha'p, translated by Pha.m Kim Kha'nh).

In Vietnamese:

[4] Tru+o+`ng Bo^ . Kinh (Digha Nikaya), 1991. Thi'ch Minh Cha^u\ . Vie^ .n Nghie^ n cu+'u Pha^.t ho.c, Vietnam (translated from the Pali script).

[5] Tru+o+`ng A Ha`m (Digha Agama), 1991. Thi'ch Tri' Ti.nh. Vie^ .n Nghie^ n cu+'u Pha^.t ho.c, Vietnam (translated from the

Chinese script).

[6] Ddu+o+`ng xu+a ma^y tra('ng, 1992. Thi'ch Nha^t Ha.nh. La' Bo^i, USA (English version: Old path, White cloud).

Personally, I prefer Ref. [1]. The Sutta was beautifully translated into English with thorough footnotes and explanation. It is a small and inexpensive booklet (US\$ 3.50 plus postage), which can be obtained from:

The Buddhist Publication Society

54, Sangharaja Mawatha

Kandy. SRI LANKA

or in USA:

Bodhi Tree Bookstore

8585 Melrose Avenue

West Hollywood. CA 90069

Tel. (310) 659 1733

The last meal

The last meal offered to the Buddha was prepared by Cunda, the metalworker [1]:

"... And Cunda, the metalworker, after the night had passed, had choice food, hard and soft, prepared in his abode, together with a quantity of sukara-maddava, ..."

".... And with the sukara-maddava prepared by him (Cunda), he served the Blessed One; and with the other food, hard and soft, he served the community of Bhikkhus."

"Thereafter, the Blessed One spoke to Cunda, saying: "Whatever, Cunda, is left over of the sukara-maddava, bury that in a pit. For I do not see in all this world, with its gods, Maras and Brahmas, among the host of ascetics and Brahmins, gods and men, anyone who could eat it and entirely digest it except the Tathágata alone." In the translation from the Pali script, "SUKARA-MADDAVA" was not translated in the English version [1; 2; 3], although Walshe translated it as "pig's delight" [2]. However, the Vietnamese versions contain the words "na^m" (mushroom) and "mo^c nhi~" (edible black fungus) [4; 5; 6]. In some other books, which I forgot the exact titles, the terms "pork meat, boar meat" were used.

According to many Pali scholars [1; 2]:

sukara: pig, boar

maddava: delicate, well-liked, soft, tender so, sukara-maddava may mean:

(1) The tender parts of a pig or boar

(2) What is enjoyed by pigs or boars, which may be referred to a mushroom or truffle, or a yam or tuber.

In some other commentaries, sukara-maddava was also mentioned as a "medicinal plant" in classic Indian medicine, or as "young

bamboo shoots trampled by pigs".

All the current scholar monks agree with the meaning of "mushroom or truffle", and I concur with them. According to the monastic rules, the monks are not allowed to eat meat from animals specifically killed to make food for them. The meaning of sukara-maddava as "pork/boar meat" is thus not appropriate here.

The last hours

3.1 "And soon after the Blessed One had eaten the meal provided by Cunda, a dire sickness fell upon him, even dysentery, and he suffered sharp and deadly pains. But the Blessed One endured them mindfully, clearly understanding and unperturbed." Then the blessed One spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying: "Come, Ānanda, let us go to Kusinara."

3.2 He was thirsty and asked Ānanda to get some water from a nearby stream which was quite muddy and turbid. However, when Ānanda took the bowl to the stream, the water became clear, pure and pleasant.

3.3 He met Pukkusa of the Malla clan, taught him about the state of calmness of those who had gone forth from the world (ie. the monks and nuns). Pukkasa was impressed, asked to be ordained, and took refuge in the Triple Gems. It is noted that in this part of the Sutta, as well as in many other Discourses, the Pali recitation of the three Refuges which is still recited in many Theravadin countries in present time was presented:

Buddham Saranam Gachami (I take the refuge in the Buddha)

Dhammam Saranam Gachami (I take the refuge in the Dhamma)

Sangham Saranam Gachami (I take the refuge in the Sangha)

3.4 When ordaining Pukkusa, the Buddha and Ānanda accepted new robes offered by him. When Ānanda helped the Buddha changing robe, he observed the skin of the Buddha becoming exceedingly clear and radiant. The Buddha told him that there were only two occasions when the Tathāgata's body was in such state: Nibbāna (Enlightenment) and Parinibbāna (Final Passing Away). The Buddha told Ānanda that He would enter Parinibbāna in the last watch of that night. 3.5 He then took a rest, and advised Ānanda to tell Cunda, the metalworker, not to have any remorse because of that last meal. He told Ānanda that there were two equally important meals, which had been offered to him: the one offered to him before Enlightenment and the one before Parinibbāna.

He then spoke of the importance of generosity, moral conduct, and mind training (Dana, Sīla, Bhāvanā - Bo^' thi', Tri` gio+'i, Thie^`n ddi.nh):

"Who gives, his virtues shall increase;

who is self-curbed, no hatred bears;

whoso is skilled in virtues, evil shuns,

and by the rooting out of lust and hate
And all delusion, comes to be at peace".

3.6 The Buddha went to Mallas's sala grove, in the vicinity of Kusinara, and asked Ánanda to prepare a couch for him, between the twin sala trees, with the head to the north. He then instructed Ánanda on how to respect and venerate Him:

"... Whatever Bhikkhu or Bhikkhuní, layman or laywoman, abides in the Dhamma, lives uprightly in the Dhamma, walks in the way of the Dhamma, it is by such a one that the Tathágata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped and honored in the highest degree. Therefore, Ánanda, thus should you train yourselves: 'We shall abide by the Dhamma, live uprightly in the Dhamma, walk in the way of the Dhamma'..."

3.7 The Buddha advised all beings present at the site, including many deities, that:

"Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this (his imminent death) be otherwise?"

3.8 The Buddha advised Ánanda on the four places a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence: His birth place, the place where He became enlightened, the place where He gave the first discourse (Setting the Dhamma Wheel in Motion), the place where He passed away.

3.9 When Ánanda asked how should he treat the Buddha's body after death, the Buddha said:

"Do not hinder yourselves, Ánanda, to honor the body of the Tathágata. Rather you should strive, Ánanda, and be zealous on your own behalf, for your own good. Unflinchingly, ardently and resolutely you should apply yourselves to your own good."

3.10 When Ánanda was weeping, the Buddha told him:

"Enough, Ánanda! Do not grieve do not lament. For have I not taught from the very beginning that with all that is dear and beloved, there must be change, separation and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, compounded, and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution? There can be no such state of things ... Now you should put forth energy, and soon you too will be free from the taints.'"

3.11 The Buddha taught Sabhadda, a wandering ascetic, about the Noble Eightfold Path, and admitted him into the Order. Sabhada was the last disciple.

3.12 The Buddha told Ánanda and other Bhikkhus that after his death, they should abide to his teaching as their teacher:

"Ánanda, what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and discipline will be your teacher when I am gone."

3.13 The Buddha asked all the monks whether they had any doubts or uncertainty about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, or about the path or the practice. He asked them three times but they

all kept silent.

3.14 And the Buddha addressed the monks, saying:

" Behold now, Bhikkhus, I declare to you: all conditioned things are of a nature to decay. Strive on with earnestness."

These were the last words of the Tathágata.

3.15 The Buddha then entered the first jhana, the second jhana, the third jhana, the fourth jhana. Then he entered the sphere of Infinite Space, the sphere of Infinite Consciousness, the sphere of Nothingness, the sphere of Neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Then, he attained the cessation of feeling and perception.

Leaving the attainment of cessation of feeling and perception, he entered the sphere of Neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the sphere of Nothingness, the sphere of Infinite Consciousness, the sphere of Infinite Space. Then he entered the fourth jhana, the third jhana, the second jhana, the first jhana.

Leaving the first jhana, he entered the second jhana, the third jhana, the fourth jhana. Leaving the fourth jhana, the Blessed One immediately passed away.

What can I learn?

Every time I read the Maha Parinibbána Sutta [1; 2], I always discover something new to my understanding of the Dhamma:

(1) The Buddha reached Enlightenment when he was 35 years old, but he still lived on to the age of 80, to teach the Dhamma and the path to liberation. His body, however, was just like our body consisting of the five heaps (skandhas: form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness), and thus subjected to decay and death.

(2) The food prepared by Cunda, the metalworker, was not poisonous, but could be regarded as a catalyst triggering his death.

(3) Enduring the pain with calmness and mindfulness, he continued to teach the Dhamma to his followers to the last moment, and accepted two more disciples.

(4) He was also very thorough in instructing Ánanda not to blame Cunda for the last meal, by summarizing his teaching in Generosity - Moral Conduct - Mind Training, instructing the people to revere the Dhamma, instructing the monks how to keep the Dhamma alive as their guide and teacher after his death, and also made sure that his teachings were fully understood by his disciples by asking them three times. His final words were again a Dhamma on the impermanent nature of things, and an advice to his disciples to continue their training effort.

(5) He approached the final moment with dignity, peace and mindfulness as he had always advocated: entering into all stages of meditative absorptions, and without attachment, leaving them behind before passing away. Binh Anson, Perth, Western Australia
September 1996--

http://www.buddhisminformation.com/how_did_the_buddha_die.htm

Then, the next morning, the Buddha started out direct for Kusinara, and on the way, at a little village called Pava, He was invited by the son of the village goldsmith, whose name was Cunda, to partake of a meal of *sukara-maddavam*, a kind of mushroom which wild boars much delight to eat, hence its name which means *boar's delight*.

The Buddha partook of the meal Cunda offered Him, and after He had eaten, felt very much refreshed and strengthened. Indeed, He thought He had quite got over His illness and He praised Cunda for having given Him a meal that had done Him so much good, and said that the good deed Cunda thus had done would make for his well-being both here and hereafter, both now and in the future.

Unfortunately, the improvement produced in the Buddha's condition by the meal Cunda had just given Him, did not last very long. The illness that had first attacked Him at Beluva came on Him again. But again by a great effort of will He mastered it, and getting to His feet, with failing strength struggled on once more towards Kusinara, and after a painful journey at length reached the grove of Sal trees outside the town which belonged to the princes of the place.

<http://www.tipitaka.net/ebooks/book0003/part18.htm>

Buddha ate meat -Please read 'Ragula Sangiruthiyayan's translation of 6th Century BC novel - (the original stone-form of this book is available in the Poona Museum).

KUSHNAGAR belonged to the Malla republic. A small republic in the Buddha's day, it was taken over by the Magadha empire (whose capital had been Rajhagriha) soon after the Buddha's death. The Buddha is said to have fallen ill after eating bad meat or a poisonous mushroom served to him by the householder Cunda. Though the Buddha fell ill just outside of Kushnagar, he had anticipated his death even before visiting Cunda and had planned to pass away in Kushnagar. <http://www.padmasambhava.org/psc/pilgrimage/kushnagar/kushnagar.asp>

Martial arts, particularly those Asian in origin, sprung from cultures which held medicinal plants in high esteem. Mushrooms proved to be a rich source of sustenance, providing medicine, dyes and potent poisons. Popes and kings have been assassinated with toxic mushrooms and according to legend, Buddha died from eating a mushroom. Wood conk mushrooms (*Inonotus obliquus* and *Fomes fomentarius*) were some of the few natural remedies for combating viral and bacterial diseases such as tuberculosis as well as an agent for retarding a variety of cancers. In several native societies, mind-altering mushrooms have traditionally been used by warrior priests for heightening awareness, for vision quests and for foretelling the future. *MUSHROOMS, THE HWARANG & THE MARTIAL ARTS* by Paul Stamets, email: mycomedia@aol.com

Stopping at several villages and townships, the Buddha eventually arrived at Pava and stayed in the park of Cunda the goldsmith, who was already one of his devoted followers. At his invitation the Buddha and the monks went to his house for a meal. Cunda had prepared, besides various delicacies, a dish called *sukara-maddava*. This is interpreted in the ancient Pali commentaries in several ways: (1) as pork (this is generally accepted), (2) as bamboo sprouts trodden by pigs, (3)

as a kind of mushroom growing in a spot trodden by pigs, (4) as a rice pudding rich with the essence of milk, or (5) as a special preparation (an elixir?) intended by Cunda to prolong the Buddha's life. Whatever it might have been, the Buddha asked Cunda to serve him with sukara-maddava and to serve the bhikkhus with other dishes. At the end of the meal, the Buddha requested Cunda to bury in a hole whatever was left of the sukara-maddava, saying that only a Tathagata would be able to assimilate it. This was the Buddha's last meal.

http://www.xtec.es/~mbernat3/var/eb_lifeofbuddha.htm

After nearly fifty years of teaching, Buddha died (480 B.C.) from eating a poisonous mushroom accidentally served up by a friend. With great compassion and sensitivity to his grieving friend, Buddha told him that he had had two exceptional meals in his lifetime.

<http://www.fred.net/tzaka/buddha.html>

The historical record reveals that mushrooms have been used for less than benign purposes. Claudius II and Pope Clement VII were both killed by enemies who poisoned them with deadly Amanitas. Buddha died, according to legend, from a mushroom that grew underground. Buddha was given the mushroom by a peasant who believed it to be a delicacy. In ancient verse, that mushroom was linked to the phrase "pig's foot" but has never been identified. (Although truffles grow underground and pigs are used to find them, no deadly poisonous species are known.) <http://www.deoxy.org/mushman.htm>

Did meat play a role in the Buddha's death?

It is claimed by some that the Buddha died because he ate putrid meat, thought to be pork. It is also asserted that he condoned eating meat if you did not know, hear or suspect that the animal was killed specifically for your own consumption.

The first point has been researched by scholars and the majority of them conclude it was not meat but a poisonous truffle (a type of mushroom) that killed the Buddha. The word truffles was given as a translation for sukara-maddava. Arthur Waley in his article "Did the Buddha Die of Eating Pork?" says that sukara-maddava has four interpretations:

1. a pigs soft food.
2. pigs delight i.e.; a favorite food of pigs.
3. soft parts of a pig.
4. pig pounded i.e.; food trampled by pigs.

The scholar K. E. Neumann has shown that in Narahari's, *Rajanighantu* among the names of medical plants there occurs a whole series of compound words having pig as their first element. For example sukara-kanda means pig bulb; sukara-padika means pigs foot and sukareshita means sought out by pigs. Neumann takes sukara-maddava to mean pigs delight and assumes that it is the name of some type of truffle.

Waley further points out:

Plant names tend to be local and dialectical. It is quite likely that if such an expression sukara-maddava means truffles in Maghada (the Buddha's home) it might, in the more western and

southern centers in India where Pali Buddhism came into existence, have been entirely unknown and therefore misinterpreted.

Edward Thomas referring to the controversial sukara-maddava in his "Life of The Buddha", notes this word however, is not the obvious sukara-mamsa (pig flesh) which we would expect if this were meant.

Mrs. Rhys David in her book "A Manual of Buddhism" casts the "pigs flesh" interpretation into further doubt when she observes;

A food compound of pig flesh (sukara-mamas) does occur in the scriptures, in a Sutta of a curiously unworthy kind where a householder inviting Gotama to dine, goes through quite a menu in a refrained detail. In the literature Maddava is nowhere else associated with meat, and I remain of Rhys David's opinion that we have here a dish... of a root, such as truffles, much sought by swine, and which may have been called pigs joy. We have such a root - this the critics did not know - in our "pig nut"... the little nut shaped bulbous root which are also called "earth nuts", these are eaten and enjoyed by both pigs and children.

Overview

It should be remembered that the First Precept prohibits killing. It also makes anyone who causes another to take a life equally culpable. One of the forbidden professions is butchering.

Specifically the fifth step of the Eight Fold Path as taught by Buddha "Right Livelihood" forbids the following trades to laymen, much less monks: trading in weapons, breathing things, meat, and poisons. Further it has been stated in various Sutras that monks should pass their drinking water through a strainer before drinking it so as not to kill living things in the water. In fact, one of the items a monk was required to carry was a water strainer!

References to vegetarianism in the scriptures.

It should be noted that there are two main classes of scriptures in Buddhism, those of the Pali Cannon which form the foundation of Theravada Buddhism and the Mahayana which represents the Buddhism of China, Japan, Korea, etc. The Pali Cannon was written around 80 BC and the Mahayana in approximately 100 to 400 AD.

Pro vegetarian references:

Surangama Sutra (Mahayana)

In the Chapter entitled "The enlightenment of others" and the section Prohibition against Killing, page 154. The Buddha said:

"If a man can (control) his body and mind and thereby refrains from eating animal flesh and wearing animal products, I say he will really be liberated."

Also from the Surangama Sutra:

"The reason for practicing dhyana and seeking to attain Samadhi is to escape from the suffering of life, but in seeking to escape from the suffering ourselves why should we inflict it upon others? Unless you can so control your minds that even the thought of brutal unkindness and killing is abhorrent, you will never be able to escape from the bondage of the world's life...After my Parinirvana in the last kalpa different kinds of ghosts will be encountered everywhere deceiving people and teaching them that they can eat meat and still attain enlightenment... How can a bhikshu, who hopes to become a deliverer of others, himself be living on the flesh of other sentient beings?"

Brahmajala Sutra, (What the Teaching is Not), from the Pali Canon; "Long Discourses of the Buddha", Sutta 1: Translation by Maurice Walshe pages 69 and 70.

"Whereas some ascetics and Brahmins, feeding on the food of the faithful, remain addicted to the enjoyment of stored-up goods such as food, drink, clothing, carriages, beds, perfumes and meat, the ascetic Gotama refrains from such enjoyment."

Lankavatara Sutra (Mahayana) translated from Sanskrit by D. T. Suzuki. This Sutra was a discussion of the fundamental concepts of Mahayana Buddhism. Chapter Eight is entirely devoted to the prohibition of meat eating.

"The Blessed One said this to him: For innumerable reasons, Mahamati, the Bodhisattva, whose nature is compassion, is not to eat any meat."

"Now, Mahamati, the food I have permitted (my disciples to take) is gratifying to all wise people but is avoided by the unwise; it is productive of many merits, it keeps away many evils; and it has been prescribed by the ancient Rishis. It comprises rice, barley, wheat, kidney beans, beans, lentils, etc., clarified butter, oil, honey, molasses, treacle, sugar cane, coarse sugar, etc.; food prepared with these is proper food."

"If, Mahamati, meat is not eaten by anybody for any reason, there will be no destroyer of life. Mahamati, in the majority of cases the slaughtering of innocent living beings is done for pride and very rarely for other causes."

"It is not true, Mahamati, that meat is proper food and permissible for the Sravaka (a hearer, hence a pupil or beginner) when (the victim) was not killed by himself, when he did not order others to kill it. When it was not specially meant for him."

Scripture of Brahma's Net translated from the Chinese by Rev. Hubert Nearman with Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett and Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy as consultants and editors. Page 138.

Third Less Grave Precept:

On eating meat.

"Disciples of the Buddha, should you willingly and knowingly eat flesh, you defile yourself by acting contrary to this less grave Precept. Pray, let us not eat any flesh or meat whatsoever coming from living beings."

Pro meat eating references:

Pali Canon, Vinaya Pitaka, Chapter on Devadata (Buddha's first cousin).

The Buddha is reported to have said:

"I have allowed fish and meat that is pure in the three aspects; when it is not seen or heard or suspected to have been killed for one personally."

The above may be found in "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nanamoli pg. 267.

Pali Canon, Majjhima Nikaya, Jivaka Sutta, verse 5

"Jivaka, I say that there are three instances in which meat should not be eaten: when it is seen, heard, or suspected (that the living being has been slaughtered for the bhikkhu).

I say that meat should not be eaten in these three instances. I say that there are three instances in which meat may be eaten: when it is not seen, not heard, and not suspected (that the living being has been slaughtered for the bhikkhu). I say that meat may be eaten in these three instances.

The above may be found in "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi pg. 474.

Summary:

It should be remembered that in the Buddha's time the monks existed solely by begging and that it was not possible to turn away meat without offending the giver or for that matter, the animal from which the meat came. Further it was not always possible to have vegetables due to climatic and soil conditions as evidenced by the following taken from the Chapter on "The Enlightenment of Others" / Prohibition against killing in the Surangama Sutra, pg. 153:

"Ananda, I permit the Bhikkhus to eat only the five kinds of pure flesh which are the product of my transcendental power of transformation and not of animal slaughter. You, Brahman, live in a country where vegetables do not grow because it is too damp and hot and because of all the gravel and rock. I use my power of compassion to provide you with illusory meat to satisfy your appetite. How then, after my nirvana, can you eat the flesh of living beings and so pretend to be my disciple?"

In the Lankavatara Sutra the Buddha said; "Mahamati, in this long course of transmigration here, there is not one living being that, having assumed the form of a living being, has not been your mother, or father, or brother, or sister, or son, or daughter, or the one or the other, in various degrees of kinship; and when acquiring another form of life may live as a beast, as a domestic animal, as a bird, or as a womb-born, or as something standing in some relationship to you; (this being so) how can the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva who desires to approach all living beings as if they were himself and to practice the Buddha-truths, eat the flesh of any living being that is of the same nature as himself?"

The Buddha may have permitted monks to eat meat under very limited circumstances. Would he allow monks to eat meat today? It is very doubtful, as there are many alternatives to meat and the Buddha clearly indicated that *not* eating meat was preferable if at all possible.

<http://www.hsuyun.com/vegetarian.html>

Sleeping Buddha based on material offered by [Mr.Du Feibao](#)

The Sleeping Buddha is Sakyamuni on his death bed entering nirvana. It can be seen in temples, grottoes or frescoes all round China, varied from stone engraving, wood cutting, jade carving, clay sculpture, coloured drawing to metal moulding. Its size can be so long as to tens of meters or as small as a grain of rice.

Mr. *Zhao Puchu*, the president of China Buddhism Association, such described the authentic sight of Sakyamuni's nirvana in the book of "*General Knowledge of Buddha*":

"Before the Buddha's death, he became severely sick. He walked northwest with his disciples and had the food offered by a blacksmith. His illness was getting worse. In the end, he came to a river and took a bath. Then he made a rope bed among eight sal trees, with each direction has two. He lied on his side, right hand supporting his head, the other resting on his body. All later reclining Buddhas (called *Buddha's Nirvana*) are in the same posture.