

METABOLIC DHARMA

μεταβολή (greek: *metabolē*) change

धर्म (sanskrit: *dharma*) reality

humans eat the meat of pastured animals, deer eat plants, snakes eat centipedes, owls eat mice.

of the four, which knows the correct flavor?

zhuangzi, ch. 2

mitochondria are most intimate

mitochondrial awryness, frequently diagnosed as [insulin resistance](#), appears to be the driver of many modern troubles, including: neurological challenges including [dementia](#) and [epilepsy](#), generalised malaise (CFS, [long covid](#), etc) [sarcopenia](#), [diabetes](#), [cardiovascular diseases](#), [psychological distress](#), and [cancer progression](#)

a holistic ketogenic diet can be thought of as replete, rather than as a restriction

it is a false hierarchy that positions animal life as separate from and more important than plant and soil life, and human life as separate from and more important than other animal life

as we develop deeper and less reactive intuition, recognizing consciousness at both mitochondrial¹ and planetary levels ([gaia](#), [grasslands](#)), it follows for each of us to (re)consider what might be our personally most ethical and least harmful diet,^{2, 3} in light of both mitochondria and the principles of [agroecology](#)^{4, 5, 6}

the common reasoning that it is somehow more ethical to eat beings that are more different from and smaller than us (plants, birds, fish, bivalves), rather than more like us (other large mammals) is not an objective truth, but follows cultural norms and is ballyhooed by capitalism

consider the [global farm metric](#) / refocus climate concerns towards fossil fuels [incl travel, plastics, and big pharma]⁷

[staying with the trouble](#)⁸

¹ Martin Picard, [12 min. introductory video](#)

² Mandel, Roi, et al. [Dairy vs beef production](#), *animal*

³ Shattuck, Kathryn. [Let them eat acorns](#), *New York Times*

⁴ wikipedia entry on [natural farming](#) and Masanobu Fukuoka

⁵ National Resources Defense Council's [regenerative agriculture 101](#)

⁶ Olson, Amy. [Relationships of regeneration](#), *Dartmouth News*

⁷ Young, Richard. [Claims against meat fail to consider bigger picture](#), *Sustainable Food Trust*

⁸ Sustainable Food Trust responds to George Monbiot, [article](#)

KETO FOR PEACENIKS

This is an introduction/invitation to experiment with a holistic ketogenic⁹ diet, for folks who have delved into a plurality of imagination paradigms and well-being modalities, yet still have some lingering sense, subtle or not, of some underlying snag. While adequate sleep, contemplative practices, forest bathing, qigong, somatic therapies, talk therapy, traditional chinese medicine, walking, western herbalism, etc., may be very helpful, if these skillful practices are in the midst of an inappropriate diet, they won't restore our blown-out spark plugs. Not only a junk food diet, but also a plant-centered rainbow diet can gradually precipitate a cascade of problems, not only because our health is determined by both the present and the past – and this includes both our childhood and our ancestors. Metabolic crisis manifests differently in each of our bio-individual responses to myriad causes and conditions.

We are simultaneously individual beings and infinite fractals of energy. When we notice a persistent ache in our head, heart, and/or belly, it may be helpful to remember that it is “hitched to everything else in the universe”. Instead of treating symptoms that seem to then shapeshift into other ailments, we can repair our metabolism, which has welcome effects throughout the body, since interbeing is epitomized not only by the forest and mycelium, but also by the constant mitochondrial communication and linked behaviors throughout our vast cellular network, among all tissues and organs, and everywhere along our intricate neural pathways.

The vast majority of information available regarding our health, including from many physicians, is a repetition of incorrect hypotheses that promote a species-inappropriate diet which is counter to traditional, let alone pre-agricultural, foodways, and disregards the health of the planet. Rather, let's go for dignity all the way down, since we know that interdependence is reality. Centering ancestrally attuned whole foods from our particular bioregion supports us to feel whole in our personhood – evolutionarily aligned and intuitively coherent.

Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. [Undrowned](#)

Georgia Ede's website, [diagnosis:Diet](#)

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. [Braiding Sweetgrass](#)

O'Hearn, Amber. [The Facultative Carnivore](#)

Taubes, Gary. [“What if it's all been a big fat lie?”](#)

Buhner, Stephen Harrod. [The secret teachings of plants](#)

Ben-Dor, Miki, et al. [The evolution of the human trophic level during the Pleistocene](#)

⁹ [“Understanding the well-formulated ketogenic diet”](#), Metabolic Mind website

ABOUT THIS ME

Born in 1970 with parents who were influenced by the book *Diet for a Small Planet*, I was a whole-foods vegan from the age of 11. Over 40+ years my personal well-being deteriorated in ebbs and flows, including frequent and lingering illnesses, aches, and general malaise, despite my commitment to all manner of self-care. I finally concluded I simply had been dealt a weak life-force, and rationalized it as a manifestation of *virāga* (detachment). Yet part of me was still wishing to feel better, and I had a hunch there was a root cause. One of the things that finally allowed me to question my diet was an evolution of my understanding of the first Buddhist precept. For many years I was confident that I was 'correctly' interpreting it, in its common gloss as 'do not kill', in part to mean 'don't eat animals'. In Pali, the precept is *pāṇātipāta veramani sikkhāpadam samadiyami*. *Pāṇātipāta* is a compound word from *pāṇā* – breath, or life, and *atipāta* – destruction. I have refocused my interpretation of the precept onto living ecological systems. So neither purposely causing distress to another breathing being nor contributing to soil depletion. In the category of *beings*, I include every individual animal, plant, mushroom, and microbe, every local ecosystem, and Gaia as a whole. With this less species-specific understanding, and knowing that the life-death cycle is ongoing among all of us, indeed is happening endlessly both within and around us, I now interpret the first precept as our responsibility to not undermine the welfare and dignity of any being or place.

Furthering my knowledge in the fields of nutrition and ecology, combined with a loosening of my long-fixed views, led to a personal paradigm shift, and my still-locavore diet is now centered on meat from pastured ruminants, with very low carbohydrate intake. This is what feels best for me personally at present. And I happily discovered I was mistaken – I do have a life force.

My everyday commitments are to friendliness and equanimity. I've long participated on an edge of the so-called art world. My last official job was as an Associate Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University, and I resigned in 2013. I was rather a misfit in the formal educational sphere, and now abide wholly in the informal. I've taken vows in the Plum Village and San Francisco Zen Center lineages. Walking has been a primary activity for many years, and when I'm not barefoot, I wear thin-soled shoes. Also, ashkenazi ancestry, autistic phenotype, and mirror-touch synesthesia.

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