

A book promoting veganism

By Richard H. Schwartz

THE FRENCH writer Victor Hugo famously wrote: “Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come.” *Vegan Voices: Essays by Inspiring Changemakers*, through insightful essays by dedicated vegan activists, provides many reasons why the time has come for a societal shift to veganism. These include:

- There has been an explosion in the number of plant-based substitutes for meat and other animal products, some with the appearance, texture, and taste so similar to the animal products that even long-time meat-eaters can’t tell the difference. Many people, especially those in the younger generation, are shifting toward vegan diets.

- People are becoming increasingly aware of the seriousness of climate threats, and the importance of shifts to vegan diets as an essential part of efforts to avert a climate catastrophe. They are also recognizing more and more that such shifts would not only reduce emissions of methane, a very potent greenhouse gas, but would also permit the reforestation of over a third of the ice-free land area currently used for grazing and raising feed crops for animals. This would result in the sequestering of atmospheric CO₂, reducing it from its current very dangerous level to a safe one.

- There is increasing awareness of the horrible conditions for animals on factory farms.

- There is also increasing awareness that animal-based diets and agriculture contribute significantly to heart disease, several forms of cancer, strokes, and other life-threatening diseases; rapid species extinction, deforestation, coral reef destruction, water and air pollution, and other environmental problems; the very wasteful use of land, water, energy, and other resources; and the potential of future pandemics.

Vegan Voices was published at an opportune time. Its editor, Joanne Kong, DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts), author of *If You’ve Ever Loved An Animal, Go Vegan*, has assembled 51 dedicated vegans, all of whom contribute interesting, inspiring, stories of how they became veg-

ans and were motivated to become committed activists. Once they learned the truth about the many negative effects of animal-based diets, each was compelled to share vegan messages to a largely unaware, unconcerned world. Collectively, the cases they make are compelling, and I believe that any non-vegan who reads the book with an open mind would have a hard time continuing on an animal-based diet.

Among the included vegans who have had major impacts on the world are: Prof. T. Colin Campbell, leader of the China, Cornell, Oxford study that *The New York Times* dubbed the “Grand Prix of epidemiology”; Ingrid Newkirk, co-founder and director of People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA); Will Tuttle, PhD, author of the acclaimed, *The World Peace Diet*, a book that has been translated into many languages; and Karen Davis, founder and director of United Poultry Concerns and author of several books including *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs*.”

Among the interesting stories of how people became vegans are that of Ori Shavit, a food critic, who, on what she thought initially would be a disastrous dinner when her date told her he was a vegan, listened to his arguments and became a vegan activist; T. Colin Campbell, whose research was initially to find benefits of animal-based protein so people would eat more meat, but learned that such protein actually has very negative health effects; and Ingrid Newkirk, celebrating her birthday at a lobster house, suddenly bursting into tears as she recognized at her first bite that lobsters have feelings and should not be mistreated and eaten.

The book’s foreword was written by Victoria Moran, podcaster, founder and director of Main Street Vegan, and author of many books about veganism. In the forward, she discusses how much better a vegan world would be than our current world.

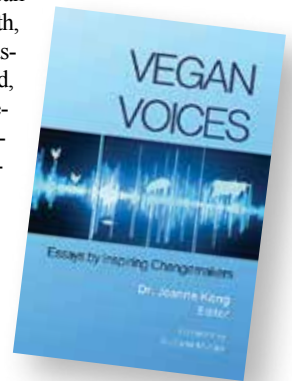
The book’s overall message can be summed up by a statement in the preface by Dr. Kong: “Veganism is a revolution of the heart, a call for a world of greater peace, health, and harmony created through expanding our circles of compassion,” combined with the statement in

her eloquent, inspiring afterword: “As I reflect upon the essays in this book, it is clear me that fundamental changes are vital, as humankind moves forward from present-day challenges and threats... whether they are related to the coronavirus, climate change and environmental devastation, food justice, world hunger, poverty, disease, or rising social inequities.”

While I have been promoting vegetarianism and now veganism for over 40 years and have read many books and articles on the subject, I still found much new information, many new concepts, and much inspiration from this wonderful book.

Each essay is a gem, very worth reading. Taken together, the 51 essays make an extremely powerful case. At this critical time, when the world faces a devastating pandemic, a looming climate catastrophe, an epidemic of diet-related diseases, and shortages of water and other resources, *Vegan Voices* has the potential to help shift our imperiled planet onto a sustainable path.

It is essential that its powerful messages be widely read and heeded. If you are a vegan or have a basically plant-based diet, read it and be inspired. If you have not yet adopted such a diet, read it and learn in a very reader-friendly way how you can improve your health, bring more compassion into the world, and help leave a decent, habitable, environmentally sustainable world for the future generations.



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