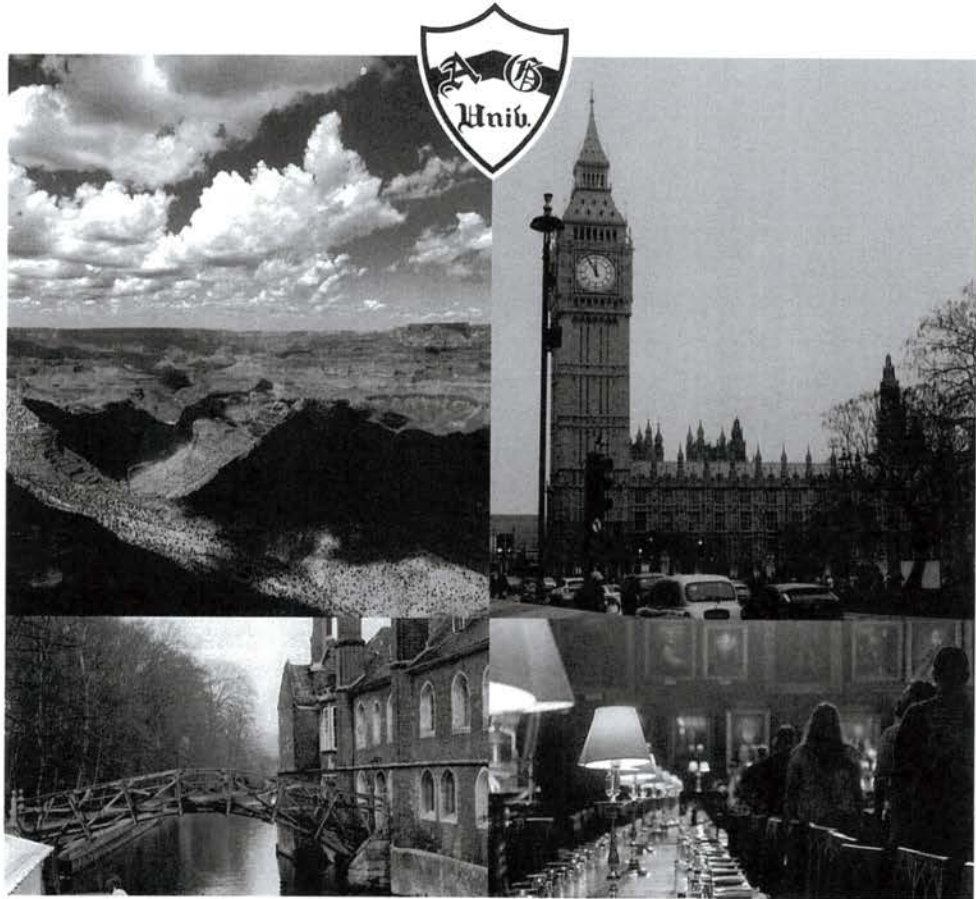


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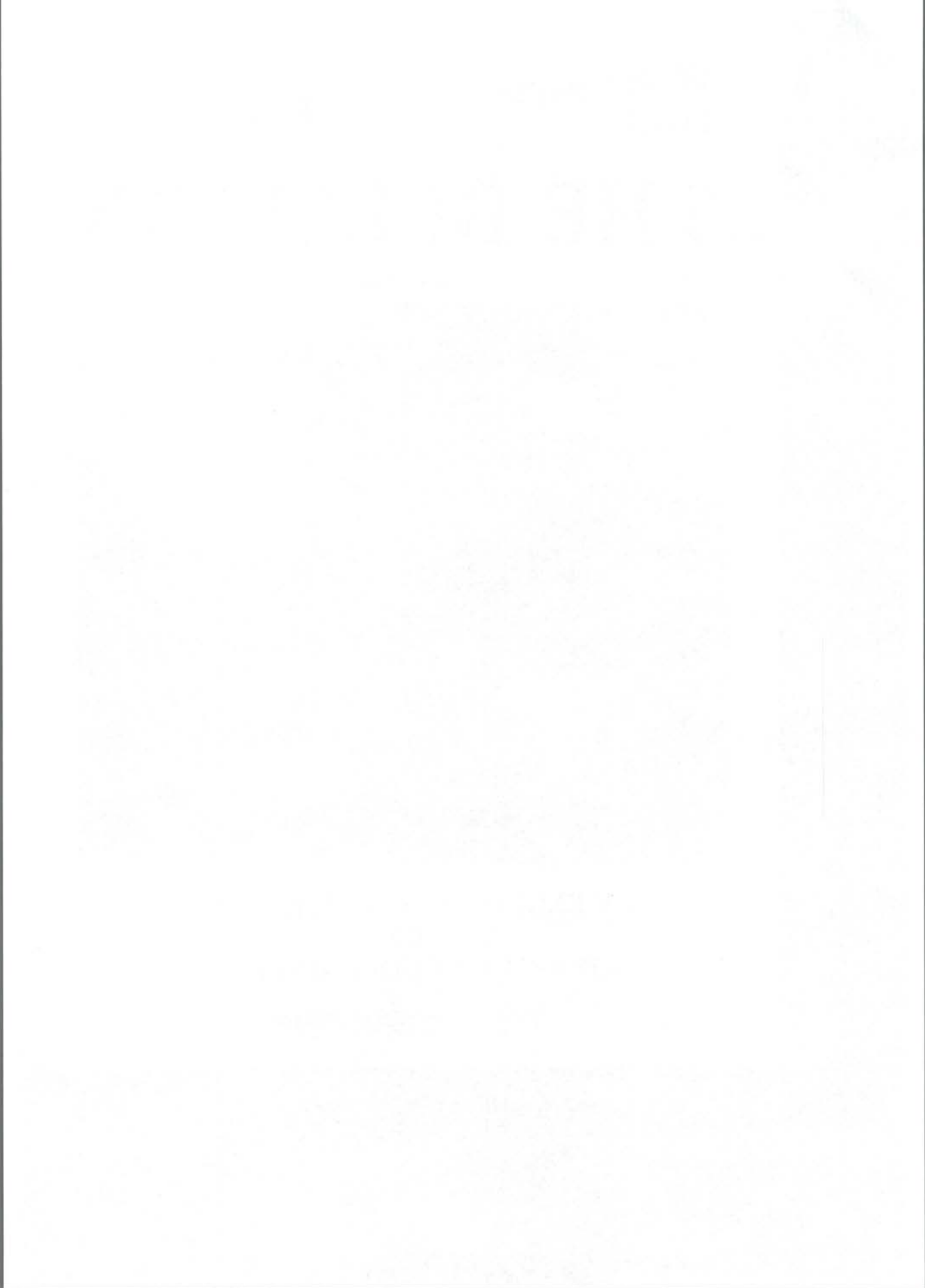
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THE ENGLISH LITERARY SOCIETY
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青山学院大学英文学会



中の日本ハムファンの歓喜を同期させた美しい放物線。後にも先にも、あんなに「衝撃的」なホームランを見ることはないでしょう。しかし、肝心の試合結果はというと、その後の9回裏には日本ハムの当時のクローザー横山道哉があっけなく西武の和田にサヨナラホームランを打たれ、ファイターズの2004年シーズンは幕を下ろしてしまいました。

スマホを開けばYouTubeでも簡単に該当のホームラン映像を見ることができる2019年ですが (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz0VbB0Uw1Q>)、あの衝撃は、すべての

観客が右中間を走るボールの浮遊を目で追うという「仰角」の姿勢が可能にしてくれたものだろうと信じています。浮かぶボールの周囲ではまるで時間が静止したかのような瞬間のサスペンス。そこに身を置いてはじめて、私はあのホームランを衝撃として体感したのだと言えるでしょう。手の平にすっぽり収まるスマホへ視線を落とす「俯角」ばかりが支配的な姿勢になりつつある神経症のご時世ですが、それでは決して見えないこと、感じられないことが、この世界にはとっとも多いのだ、とあらためて思った次第です。

Joseph V. Dias 先生

Is it really possible to avoid consuming animal products?

Like many people, when I first heard about “veganism” I thought it was admirable to avoid eating animals or using animal products, but not practical or personally sustainable. Perhaps the biggest surprise of my life was to realize that veganism is not just a “pie in the sky” utopian dream, but a lifestyle that is achievable, practical, and may one day become inevitable.

I have been practicing a vegan diet and lifestyle for 26 years. 「ダイエット」 is an expression used in Japanese that refers to efforts to lose weight, either by changing one’s eating habits or through exercise. When I say that I have been following a “vegan diet,” I don’t mean that I’ve been trying to lose weight. “Diet” is used here to mean “a way of eating” and, especially, the idea of making principled choices about what is consumed. According to The Vegan

Society (2019), “Veganism is a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.”

This means that being a vegan informs the decisions one makes not only about what one eats, but also about what is worn and purchased. Leather belts and shoes are avoided and even wool is eschewed because the sheep raised for shearing inevitably end up as mutton. Many people find it difficult to think of eggs and milk as animal products and might wonder why vegans avoid them. The vast majority of hens’ eggs come from chickens raised in battery cages. In the US, for example, hens are allowed only only 170 square centimeters of space—less than a single sheet of letter paper—to live their short and miserable lives (The

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Humane Society of the U. S., 2019). In order to produce milk, calves must be unnaturally separated from their mothers soon after birth and then repeatedly impregnated to ensure a constant flow of milk. Although many Japanese may find it unimaginable for fish to be absent from their dinner plates, vegans also avoid fish and sea mammals because they too are seen as sentient beings.

With all of these items off the list of possible foods to consume, you might ask “What is left?” Fortunately, quite a lot of wholesome and nutritious items remain: legumes (beans, lentils and peas), cereals and grains (rice, wheat flours, amaranth, and quinoa), seeds (sesame, sunflower and pumpkin seeds), all kinds of fruits, and vegetables from both land and sea. Sprouts and fermented plant foods are also on the menu: tempeh, miso, natto, and vegetarian versions of kimchi. Mediterranean dishes such as hummus, falafel, pita bread, and delicious salads—including tabouleh—are completely vegan. Indian cuisine has numerous vegetarian and vegan options: dal (lentil curry), chana masala (made with garbanzo beans), chapati, just to name a few. In addition, many Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Mexican dishes can be tweaked slightly to make them vegan. Of course, a variety of Japanese recipes are vegan without even making an effort to transform them: sushi made with kanpyō, natto, pickles, or cucumbers; the dozens of noodle dishes, as long as the dashi (stock) is made with a kombu or other plant-based source; and the many sweets (daifuku, yubeshi, karinto, etc.). There is even an entirely vegan branch of

Japanese cuisine called shōjin-ryōri, which should be nominated to UNESCO as one of the Japan's great intangible cultural heritage practices.

My personal path towards veganism began when I was in my late 20s. I became friends with a co-worker, Andy (now Dr. Andrew Nicholson MD), who shared with me a love for long-distance bicycling. We enjoyed several bicycle tours together during which time I found that he had been a vegan since his teenage years and I learned what it was like trying to find vegan-friendly restaurants and menu items when traveling with him...not so easy in rural Japan nearly 30 years ago. During the course of our shared meals, I asked him questions about why he had become a vegan and what he lost and gained from the experience. As a medical student who was currently taking a year-long break from medical school, he was well aware that one can not only survive on a vegan diet, but thrive on it as well. In fact, he had endless mental and physical energy, learning Japanese to a good conversational level after living in Japan for less than a year, and leaving me in constant “catch up” mode when bicycling with him. I learned from him the moral arguments for animal rights—articulated beautifully by Tom Regan (2004)—the great harm that animal husbandry and the raising of crops for the consumption of livestock was doing to the environment (see Carus, 2010), and the nutritional arguments supporting a plant-based diet (Campbell et al., 1998; Esselstyn et al., 2012).

It took me three or four years to go from being intellectually convinced that a vegan

diet and lifestyle was right for animals, the environment, and my health to actually implementing it in my own life. What kept me from plunging into it right away was the possibility that I would miss taste experiences and foods that I was fond of, particularly cheese, not wishing to be inconvenienced (or to inconvenience others), and the fear that my social life would shrink. As it turned out, I had exaggerated all of these fears in my mind, and, after a period of adjustment and learning how to find vegan-friendly restaurants and shops—and discovering a whole new assortment of like-minded friends, online and in my community—I was able to happily embrace veganism. I never looked back or considered returning to the life of an omnivore.

It is far easier for those becoming vegans today because the number of vegetarian/vegan-friendly restaurants has vastly increased, particularly here in Tokyo, and through the Internet we can effortlessly purchase vegan staples. The understanding of “veganism” is gradually expanding in Japan and we increasingly see positive stories related to it in the media. The cafeteria at the Tokyo Metropolitan government offices even offers vegan menu items daily and Meat Free Mondays. We are also fortunate in Japan that vegans are not mocked, criticized, or even threatened (Higgins, 2018) in the same way that they frequently are in the U.S. In a recent *New York Times* editorial, Farhad Manjoo (2019) noted that “in the media [and] in pop culture it is still widely acceptable to make fun of vegans” with a survey finding that vegans are considered “more negatively than atheists and immi-

grants, and are only slightly more tolerated than drug addicts.” He makes the case for more respect to be shown for vegans because, even though he is not vegan himself, he considers them to be on the right side of history.

The hamburger that you eat a year from now might be made from the beef of a steer that’s produced in grasslands created by purposely set fires now raging in the Amazon rainforest. Manjoo correctly points out that these fires in the Amazon have been set “to clear ground for cattle ranching and for the cultivation of soy, the vast majority of which goes not into tofu but into animal feed, including for fast-food chicken.” So, the burning Amazon today can be the KFC of tomorrow. The question we have to ask ourselves is can we, and the planet for that matter, live with the lifestyle choices we make every time we lift our forks, put on clothing, or purchase something. As the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has been teaching us, the time for thinking small is over. Instead of making cosmetic changes to our lives and ways of living, we (and society) will have to begin to take radical action. Although it might be the norm in the future, becoming a vegan today means, in some ways, being a radical.

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A vegan dish in at a restaurant in Huế, Vietnam. This kind of bird is acceptable to vegans.



Eating a vegetarian meal at the Israeli restaurant Ta-im.

