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### **Stepping-stones for the emergence of vegetarianism in the Buddhist tradition**

As is well-known, in Indian Buddhism, meat-eating was allowed even to monks and nuns, under certain conditions. It is only in one strand of Mahāyāna Buddhism that, around or somewhat before 400 AD, a vegetarian strand emerged. Similarly, among Chinese Buddhists, vegetarianism prevailed. According to a path-breaking paper by Eric M. GREENE (*Asia Major* 2016), it is already before the Indian vegetarian texts were introduced and translated into Chinese in the 1st half of the 5th century that Chinese Buddhists had turned towards a vegetarian diet, in order to establish "a distinctly Buddhist identity vis à vis mainstream Chinese religion ..., defined above all by rituals of sacrifice". This is surely an important perspective, but in the case of the emergence of the vegetarian strand in Indian Buddhism it may not work. And in both cases such a basic re-orientation would seem to presuppose, in the earlier tradition, some starting-point(s), or stepping-stone(s), to which the new attitude could refer and on which it could build. In my paper, I shall try to point out a couple of such stepping-stones.