

Why people are cruel to animals and what to do about it?

Hi Friend,

I have a new answer to your question about why people are cruel to animals. It comes from the fact that they are alienated from their true nature. Because they don't recognize that at their core they are the energy of buddha nature, people fall into a mistaken view or delusion that they are separate beings apart from all "others". They are blind to the oneness of all life, to its interconnectedness, and so cling to their notion of self and its needs. They just focus on themselves - me and mine, my needs - and don't really focus much on the needs of others, and even less on the needs of non-human sentient beings. When your life revolves around self-cherishing there is not much room left for compassion for others, responsibility for others and their welfare, and thinking beyond yourself. All those people are trapped in the delusional hell that Buddhists call samsara. Trapped in that delusion, they cause suffering for themselves and suffering for others around them (including pets).

What to do? You start with yourself and learn to focus on the needs of others and deepen your compassion for their suffering. When there are effective ways to help them (like supporting the work of a humane society), help them. Be an example of compassion for other beings and you can change the attitudes and behaviors of others, maybe not as fast as you would like, but create real change in the world.

Be well and be compassionate with yourself. dt