

[Humane Society video exposes animal horrors](#)

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DOCUMENTARY

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It's a terrible truth, unknown to most Hindus. One million old cattle a year are sold at auction by poor farmers in Tamil Nadu, India. In batches of several hundred, they are herded into trucks, driven miles to the state border, then forced to walk 200 kilometers into Kerala, there to be inhumanely slaughtered in unsanitary conditions. This "death march" is documented in the short film "India's Animals," produced by the Humane Society of the US and narrated by veterinarian Michael Fox.

Once they are bought, little is done to alleviate the animals suffering. They're beaten and shoved into trucks and beaten again and again during the march to Kerala. Those that fall from disease or exhaustion have chili or salt put in their eyes to make them get up. Once at the Kerala slaughterhouse, their throats are slit. In the most gut-wrenching scene in the video, we see cows slowly, consciously, bleed to death.

Fox appeals for this inhumane treatment to stop. The death march, he says, "reflects the paradox of a culture where animals are revered as religious symbols, but real animals are often treated with little compassion or understanding. Beliefs

and politics, more than lack of money, block India from humane treatment." Unfortunately, that statement tends to point the finger only at Hindus, leaving out, for example, that Kerala is a communist-run state with a large meat-eating Christian population unsympathetic to cow protection. In fact, most of the meat is sent to Malaysia and Saudi Arabia as halal, meaning killed in the prescribed manner of the Muslim religion--and also Jewish kosher law--slitting the animal's throat.

In an interview with Hinduism Today, Fox did not deny skipping these points, but said in other videos, especially "Animals, Nature and Religion," he and the Humane Society strongly criticized both slaughterhouse practices [see below] and the complicity of Western religions in failing to improve animal treatment. Fox's forthcoming book, *India's Sacred Cow: Her Plight and Future*, is a comprehensive and balanced treatment of this controversial subject. Still, "India's Animals," could be more accurate in assigning blame for the horrific "death march." For as the Kural says, "If the world did not purchase and consume meat, there would be no one to slaughter and offer meat for sale."

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