

Let's Go Green!

Green, a colour that may refresh you in a gloomy day. It may also remind you of the astonishing forests that act like the lungs of the earth. What is more, when “green” is made to be “common”, it could be a place for you to learn how to eat and live in a sustainable way.

Green Common in the New Millennium

Green Common, a plant-based grocery shop and restaurant in Hong Kong, has been operated by the social enterprises Green Monday¹ since 2015 (Photo 1). It aims at raising the public awareness of the livestock industry's towering impact on global warming.



Global warming has become one of the hot issues raising many concerns and discussions in recent years. In addition to burning of fossil fuels, one of the major sources of greenhouse gases emission is livestock rearing. A large amount of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, have been released in the process of meat

¹ Green Monday <http://greenmonday.org/zh-hant/environment/>

production. The carbon footprint of red meat is recorded to be 10 times higher than vegetables. “By selling meatless products, we would like the public to realize the benefit of meatless dining and importance of carbon-footprint reduction”, mentioned by Tiffany Cheung, the assistant program manager of Green Monday in an interview.

“Make changes happen! Make Green Common”

How to make changes happen? Green Common has implemented a series of green practices based on its vision of developing a more sustainable life.

a) Food Revolution 2.0

“Sustainable, innovative, wholesome and responsible”, are the major maxims behind Green Common’s selection process that contribute to the Food 2.0 Revolution. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)², carbon emitted from plants growing is much less than that of livestock rearing. For example, 1kg of beef produces 27.0kg of carbon dioxide, while 1kg tomatoes only produces 1.1kg of carbon dioxide. Not only the problem of carbon dioxide, but also the large consumption of resources including water and land, by the livestock industry. 500 of beef consumes 7000 liters of water while same amount of wheat only consumes 650 liters of water. Large area of land are used for pasture growing to supply food for livestock as well.



Photo 2: The Beyond Burger

With innovative technology, plants molecules have been used to replace meat while the texture and taste of meat could still be retained. “The Beyond Burger” (Photo 2) and “Omnipork dumplings” (Photo 3) are examples of new products invented in such groundbreaking technology. Peas and beetroots are used to pretend the colour of meat. Not only with the attractive appearance,

the Burger is healthy, 100% vegan and free of cholesterol, hormone and antibiotic.

² The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/197623/icode/>

Similarly, the dumplings are made of peas, rice and organic soy that is suitable for vegetarian.



Photo 3: Omnipork Dumplings

b) Bring Your Own Bottle

It is vital to eat sustainably while drinking should not be ignored as well. The “Bring Your Own Bottle” service provides complimentary water for all guests, including those who do not consume there (Photo 4). Everyone can go inside the restaurant and get water with their own bottles. Green Common realizes the problem caused by plastic bottles and therefore promotes the concept of bringing own bottles for drinks.



Photo 4: The “Bring Your Own Bottle” service

c) Healthy and green recipes

If you do not dine in the restaurant, you could also go green in different ways. Green Common provides various recipes for making delicious and easy meatless dishes. Food ingredients could be bought at the grocery shop and customers are encouraged to cook green and healthily at home.

“After the opening of our shop and restaurant for a year, 22% of the interviewed customers have started meatless dining. For the hardcore meat lovers, it decreases from 27% to 17%”, mentioned by Tiffany Cheung. It shows that Green Common is successful in promoting the change in values of people.

d) Design of the restaurant

To promote the Green concept, decorations inside the restaurant have been specially designed. Figures about the towering impact of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon

footprint are revealed to raise awareness (Photo 5). Quotes and posters are shown to encourage and remind people to adopt green lives (Photo 6).



Photo 5: Design that remind people to have a green living

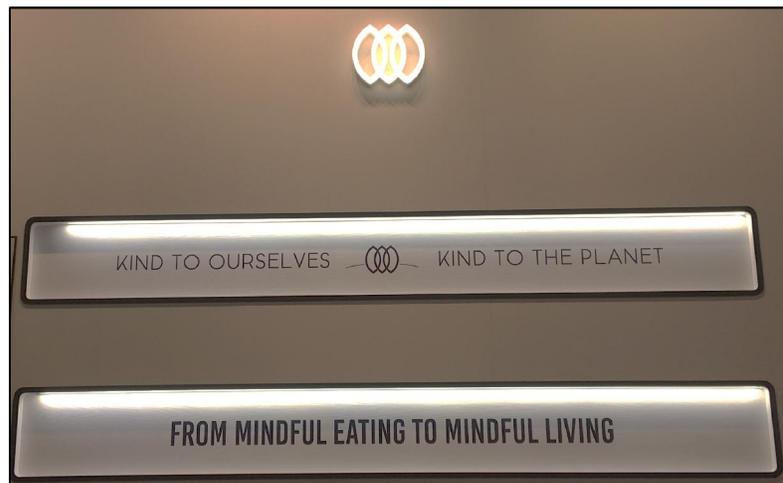


Photo 6: Quote that reminds people to go green

e) Cooperate with the Food Angel

Other than the plant-based grocery shop and restaurant, Green Common has also put effort in helping the poor in Hong Kong and contributing to environmental sustainability at the same time. Green Common collects leftover food from the buffet and wedding banquet in various hotels and restaurant. Then, the food is sent to Food Angel, a food rescue and food assistance program with the mission of “Waste Not, Hunger Not, With Love”. The food collected would be sold in low price (e.g. HK\$10). It helps the poor and reduces food waste at the same time.

Other companies can also put an effort in promoting green living and carbon-reduction. Designing green menus promoting environmental friendly messages in the

restaurant design, minimizing the use of water and energy etc. and green practices that could also be adopted. Passionate staff with the provision of suitable trainings would also contribute to the success of sustainability.

Be kind to ourselves and the planet. Let's go green and eat plant-based food at least once a week!

(925 words)