Bangladesh (孟加拉) slaughters more than a million heads of cattle during the Muslim Eid-ul-Azha festival (宰牲节) every year. Most of the animals – bones, hooves, horns, tails and even the penises are sold to China.

These “unwanted” animal parts, in fact, have many valuable uses. Cattle intestines are used to make medicine. Horns, hooves and teeth are turned into gelatin, sandpaper, combs, buttons and camera or X-ray films. Ears are boiled, dried in the sun and ground into powder to mix with poultry feed or used as fertilizers.

This is “物盡其用” (wu4 jin4 qi2 yong4). “物” (wu4) is “matter,” “things,” “盡” (jin4) is “to use up,” “to exhaust,” “其” (qi2) means “that,” and “用” (yong4) is “to use.” Literally, “物盡其用” (wu4 jin4 qi2 yong4) is “to exhaust the use of a thing.” It means “to make the best use of everything,” “to let all things fully serve their purpose.” “物盡其用” (wu4 jin4 qi2 yong4) shares the same core idea as the English expression “Waste not, want not” (勤儉節約，吃穿不缺). On a personal level, if you don’t waste, you won’t be lacking. On the society level, “物盡其用” (wu4 jin4 qi2 yong4) is to maximize the use of resources and reduce wastage. That is a sustainable lifestyle.

Therefore, an environmentally conscious society should “物盡其用” (wu4 jin4 qi2 yong4).

Terms containing the character “盡” (jin4) include:

盡力 (jin4 li4) – to try one’s best
耗盡 (hao4 jin4) – spend all, having exhausted
盡興 (jin4 xing4) – to do something to the heart’s content
自盡 (zi4 jin4) – commit suicide