

they mean societal pressure, earthly desires, and cunning thinking. Taoists veer off-centre, and Buddhists buy into the illusionary world of the senses, but the Rasta-man blames vanity, and when sat on a Japanese toilet, fiddling with buttons to vary the strength and angle of the jet massaging your ring-piece, it feels very much like that is the case.

Haemorrhoids are so common that they must be a natural result of the civilised human mind. The mind, which is supposed to make us wise, makes us so stupid that we don't know how to sit on a toilet. It makes us full of shit, individually, and also collectively, because society has become bunged up. When only the rich could afford white bread and fancy toilets, a lifetime of poor nutrition and painful digestion was their privilege, but this is no longer the case. The economics of scale have made highly processed foods far cheaper, and rustic loaves are the over-priced status symbol. Given another generation, the situation may reverse again as the demand for whole foods increases, but the end of time may come before this happens. In the meantime, it may be wiser to take to the hills and start baking your own.

Vanity slows the movement of both food and the divine in the body. We have become spiritually constipated. Fortunately there is an immensely powerful shamanic laxative speeding its way out of the Amazon into the Western world, flushing out compacted shit and bad habits wherever it meets them. It can tackle digestive problems, spiritual problems, and do a whole lot besides, and you can read all about it in Nemu's End (www.nemusend.com). Bring on the purge.

Sources:
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As children, we learn to enjoy familiar tastes, so Indians begin the day with dahl and rice, Japanese happily eat raw eggs and rotten soy beans for breakfast, and many English people tuck into sausages, fried bacon, fried eggs, fried mushrooms, fried tomatoes, and fried bread, which would probably make me puke first thing in the morning. Our tastes have grown decadent. Although the seasonal, local, GM-free, organic whole food which was once ubiquitous has recently become trendy again, it is much more expensive. Medieval peasants suffered from a scarcity of food, mainly because they bred at exponential rates whilst funding endless feudal wars, but today it is the quality of food that causes health problems.

All over the world, when the choice was available, people preferred high status foods to nutritious foods, and sitting when they would be better off squatting. Our love of convenience and status has spread bizarre habits and preventable diseases throughout the industrial world. Why are we so bad at making choices? Why are we so divorced from the true nature of our bodies? Catholics blame the world, the flesh, and the Devil, which sound like three of my favourite things, but

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A toilet paper



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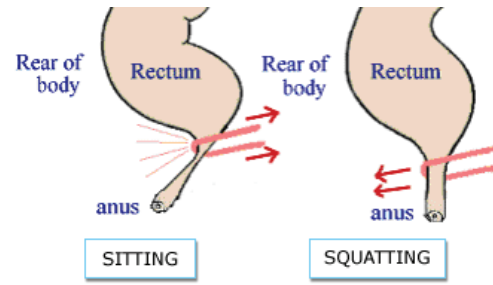
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The Reverend Nemu

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The Victorian library in Manchester had a fine collection of yellowed apocalyptic books smelling of age, where Ss were Fs, where the Pope was the Antichrist, and where England was always another comet away from the final judgement. I always looked forward to taking a distinguished crap in the hand-painted earthenware toilets, sat upon a hardwood seat where generations of learned arses had rested before me. One could not help but feel extremely cultured perched upon it, a gentleman, and a scholar.

In times past, Queen Elizabeth rested her noble fundament on a lace-trimmed velvet seat to perform her office, but the plebs squatted over a chamber pot, and as they flung their turds out of the window they would shout 'Garday-loo!', a corruption of the French 'gardez l'eau!', and probably the origin of our slang word 'loo'. The flush was perfected in the 1770s, and sit-down toilets spread through society with the Industrial Revolution. Squat pots became rare after the 1848 Public Health Act made it mandatory for every English house to be fitted with a flush toilet.

The crouch our colons were made for is favoured by all primates, all infants and the vast majority of people on the planet. Although the seated position is dignified and easy on the legs, the extra stress on the rectum causes piles and polyps, constipation, inflammatory bowel disease and colon cancer. Whilst the new loos undoubtedly improved hygiene, they forced the English into a difficult position over the toilet in more ways than one. Victorian gentlefolk, ever conscious of their breeding, distinguished themselves from the lower classes with beautifully sculpted and hand-painted crappers of fine ceramic. The poor inherited not just the seated posture of the ruling classes, but also their bum problems.



Another malignant custom plugging the bowels of the civilised world is white bread. From antiquity in Europe, white bread was a labour (or windmill) intensive status symbol which the poor could not afford. It is easier to chew because the fibre is ground away from the wheat, along with the vitamins, the oils and half of the protein. The lump of starch which remains becomes compacted in the colon, and makes the use of the sit-down toilet a more pressing matter, so to speak. In 1834, the roller mill made the bread of the rich accessible to the hoi polloi, and today it is cheaper and far more popular than wholemeal.

The same thing happened in Asia. Brown rice contains nearly everything the body requires – indeed, there are monks who live on nothing but brown rice, tea, and a single green plant. Take a grain of brown rice, polish away the fibre, the protein, the essential fatty acids, and most of the vitamins and minerals, and you are left with a grain of white rice. This agent of constipation was once reserved for samurai and other aristocrats, but it has gradually become the norm, with Filipinos as well as Japanese losing their taste for brown rice as late as the American occupation. Today, a wave of eczema, which is at least partly related to nutrition, washes over the itchy bodies of 30 percent of Japanese children. While many Japanese teenagers do not even know the Japa-



Japan: tradition vs modernity



nese word for 'brown rice', the Japanese toilet has become a multi-media theme-park, with the most outrageous warm-seated, music making, piss-analysing, arse-cleaning toilets imaginable. Some toilets sound a pre-recorded flush at the touch of a button, so bystanders can't hear you tinkle, and in the Tokyo Hilton you can take the remote control flusher out of the bog to your bedside. If you leave the loo door open and invite a guest round, you can assault her with a stream of warm water as she crosses the threshold of your room.

In Kenya the algorithm is still running. Families mix wholemeal home-grown maize flour with water over a fire and eat it with a leafy green vegetable. The taste of ugali takes time to acquire, but makes my mouth water to think of it now. The processed version sold in shops is glutinous and bland, with much less nutritional value. It

is, however, a status symbol for the increasing number who can afford it. Again in Ethiopia, the rich prefer white njira to wholemeal.

Am I pondering over my stools too much? Hey man, it's not me who takes a newspaper to the toilet! I'm in and out in a flash, knees up by my chin, treating the soles of my feet to a brief massage on the rim of the loo.

Constipation played a decisive role in the development of European philosophy. According to his own writings, the ever-constipated Martin Luther realised the true meaning of God's justice on his sit-down privy. Suddenly he knew that it was individual piety not tithes paid to the church which earned God's forgiveness, and the protest of the Protestants began. But his toilet battles with the forces of darkness would have landed him in a loony bin today:

'And though man drops his excrements in private, the slanderer does not respect this privacy. He gluts on the pleasure of wallowing in it, and he does not deserve better according to God's righteous judgment. When the slanderer whispers: Look how he has shit on himself, the best answer is: You go eat it.'

Satan regularly mooned him as he crapped, and Luther responded with threats. 'Note this down,' he wrote in record of a battle. 'I have shit in the pants, and you can hang them around your neck and wipe your mouth with it.' The two flung poo at each other, and once the devil's turd 'left a foul stench in the chamber for several days afterwards.' 'My arse has gone bad', wrote this monk, who clearly spent far too long on the loo, but his tormented ring-piece and scatologically visionary mind catalysed the Reformation. Maybe it would have passed more smoothly had he squatted like a layman, but happily, his diary records that his situation improved. 'I feel much freer now that I am certain the pope is the Antichrist.'