



The Greatest Change *part 2*

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(continued from 347)

The Diet

During the scheduling for initiation, Derek asked me if I'd considered a vegetarian diet. To add context, I grew up on a small farm in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, in North Carolina. That means eggs & bacon, sausage gravy, and biscuits were eaten for most breakfasts. I grew up with a meat-heavy but very omnivorous diet, so restricting it didn't feel like something I could do.

Derek expounded on the diet's benefits, and told me a little about how he used to eat beforehand. He also shared some resources that shocked me. I never knew that some cattle farms feed candy to their livestock, or the meat of other animals, or corn. Just about everyone hears about heavy antibiotic use and the small quarters for the animals, but seeing pictures and reports on it showed me just how bad it is. Animals living in their own waste, being fed food they aren't built to consume, and the antibiotic use aren't just crimes against nature. They contribute to MRSA and other super-bacteria, early or irregular growth in children, and let's be frank: meat itself has animal waste in it. So even after all of that mistreatment and unsanitary living, the product is hardly fit for consumption. To me, it reads as an unnecessary waste of energy and resources, drenched in blood. That can't be good for peoples' karma, either.



最重大的改變（下）

◎ 中譯 詹薏靜 鄭名翔

（接上期）

飲食

當我們正安排求道時間時，Derek 問我是否能考慮吃素。背景說明一下，我出身於北卡羅來納州阿帕拉契山下小丘上的小農場，這代表早餐大部份都是蛋、培根、香腸肉汁及小麵包；每天過著重度肉食的雜食性生活，所以禁止吃肉似乎不是件我能夠做到的事情。

Derek 詳細解釋吃素的好處，並告訴我他之前的飲食狀況；他也跟我分享了一些讓我震驚的資訊，我從不知道有些養牛場是餵糖果、其他動物的肉，或玉米給牲畜吃。就像大家曾經聽聞濫用抗生素在動物身上，以及牲畜的生活區域過小的問題，但是直接看到相關的照片跟報導，我才了解到這一切是多麼嚴重。動物與牠們的排泄物生活在一起，被餵食牠們不能消化的食物；使用抗生素不只是違反自然的罪，還造成抗藥性金黃葡萄球菌及超級細菌、讓兒童過早或不正常成長。坦白說，肉本身就含有動物的排泄物。所以，在遭受了不合理的對待，且在不衛生的生活環境下，肉類產品幾乎不適合食用。對我來說，這類食物像浸泡在血腥中，造成能源與資源不必要的浪費；對於人們的業力來說，也不是一件好事。

Derek and I had some time between e-mails, which gave me the opportunity to mull it over. A visit to TrueTao.org taught me more about Ching Ko, the cleansing ritual*. It's a vow that a cultivator takes to never eat meat again, showing their respect for all sentient beings in the universe. It translates literally into "To clear up (the) Mouth". It also deals with how you speak to others, to help you avoid harming others with your words. During the time I spent considering the diet, I took the opportunity to research and "pretend" with it. There's a surprising amount of meat substitutes out there. I had heard of things like tofu or other soybean products, but what I found was better than I had imagined. So I used these replacements for a week as a sort of test run.

During this trial run, I reflected on my attachment to meat. I often defended an omnivorous lifestyle, clarifying the importance of protein in one's diet. The only protein replacement I knew of was soy/tofu at first, but finding alternatives was actually fairly easy. Most grocery stores these days should have meat replacements available. I was able to find all sorts of things, from premade "burgers" and "chicken patties" to "turkey breast", "ground beef", and other meat substitutes that share the same look, feel, and versatility of meat, but without the necessity of killing an animal to get it. Beans became a more prominent part of my diet, too, since they're rich in protein.

With protein out of the picture, what was left? Historically I've always spoken out against animal cruelty. What kind of person would I be if I continued my omnivorous lifestyle, knowing what I learned? A hypocrite.

I obviously wasn't attached to the killing, so I asked myself what was left. It was the taste, texture, and versatility of the food. These things were achieved, more or less, by the meat replacements. They didn't carry the same risk of infection or extra hormones, and were easier on the body in terms of fats, cholesterol, and immune system function. This realization was the impetus for me to begin the diet. I now had the resolve to learn new recipes and new ways of shopping for food. Derek and I had a brief conversation, where he asked if I was sure I was ready to take the Ching Ko vow. I confirmed, and the planning was finalized.

我和 Derek 有時以電子郵件交流，這讓我有機會去思索。有一次瀏覽 TrueTao 網站（註），我學習到一項淨化的儀式「清口」；這是修道人展現對萬物生靈的尊重，而發誓永不食眾生肉；以白話來說就是「淨化口舌」。這誓言也包括對別人說的話，讓我們避免用言語傷害他人。就在後學考慮是否素食的期間，後學把握機會去研究並嘗試吃素看看，其實坊間有許多肉食替代品，以前曾經聽過豆腐或黃豆製品，但後學所發現的比想像中的更好；因此，運用這些替代品，後學展開「素食一週」的初體驗。

在這次體驗中，後學反省自己對於肉食的依賴性；過去常常捍衛雜食性的飲食習慣，認為蛋白質在飲食中是必要的。後學當初唯一所知的蛋白質替代品只有黃豆及豆腐，但其實很容易找到替代品項。近來大部分的雜貨店應該都可以買到肉類替代品；後學可以列出各式食品，從預製的素漢堡肉、素雞肉餅、素雞胸肉以及素碎牛肉，還有其他的肉類替代品，其外觀、嚼勁，以及多用途的性質都跟肉很像，而且，不須犧牲動物的生命即可取得。由於豆類含有豐富的蛋白質，因此也成為後學飲食中較重要的一部分。

除了蛋白質之外，還剩下什麼問題呢？過去後學極力反對不人道地對待動物，然而，在了解這些資訊之後，如果我持續維持肉食習慣，我會是個怎樣的人？答案是：偽君子。

很明顯地，後學不喜歡殺戮，所以捫心自問：還有什麼不能捨棄的？其實是為了追求味道、口感，以及料理的多樣性，而這些在肉類替代品中，或多或少都能取代，並且不需要承擔傳染病的風險或多餘的賀爾蒙，對於身體的體脂肪、膽固醇，以及免疫系統的負擔也較低。這方面的體悟促使後學開始素食。現在後學決心學習素食料理及採買食材。Derek 和後學曾簡短談過，他詢問後學是否準備好要立清口愿？後學跟他確認了，並決定立愿的日期。

It's important to mention that Derek asked me if I was sure: the vow is meant to be taken solemnly and seriously; backing out of that vow would be a great disgrace, both to myself and my fellow I-Kuan Tao members. Like initiation itself, one who takes the Ching Ko vow must do it of their own free will, and not due to outside pressure.

The Visit

June 18th, 2017 is the day I visited the Cheng family's shrine to be initiated. William Kuo and Michael Cheng, the host, greeted us at the door, and had footwear ready for us. It was very flattering to be assisted. I had trouble fitting my size 13 feet into most of them, but with a little determination, we found a pair that'd get the job done. I was touched by the effort they put into the guest's experience. Part of me was even a little embarrassed, since generally in America we handle that ourselves. At any rate, the welcome was warm.

The others arrived soon after, and we sat at a round dining room table. We each introduced ourselves, and William gave us a rough agenda for the day, answering questions as they came up. It included a conversation about what initiation means, what Ching Ko is (if there are candidates like I was), the rituals, and a vegetarian lunch to socialize over. Carmen Cejudo generously offered her time to assist in explaining the process, and filled in for a guarantor during the ceremony alongside Frank Lloyd.

Before the ceremony, I suddenly felt beside myself. Around this table were people from different ethnic backgrounds, coming together under a common cause: to celebrate the transmission of the Tao. It reminded me of the famous "I Have A Dream" speech delivered by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. that many people grow up learning about. For those unfamiliar, his dream was to see people coming together in fellowship, independent of the color of their skin. To me, our group was a (small) realization of that dream. It was a special moment, proving the unifying power of the Tao.

提到 Derek 曾先詢問後學是否決定立愿，這件事非常重要。立清口愿是嚴肅且慎重的；違背誓言對於自己本身，以及一貫道的道親，都是莫大的失禮。清口和求道一樣，都務必是出於自身意願而非外在壓力。

造訪

西元 2017 年 6 月 18 日這天，後學到鄭勝文壇主的家庭卮堂求道。郭詩永點傳師與鄭壇主在門口歡迎我們，並且替我們準備好鞋子；但大部分的鞋子不適合後學 13 吋的尺碼，經過一番努力，最終找到一雙合適的；對於學長們的幫忙，後學受寵若驚。學長們招待客人的方式讓後學很感動，不過也有點不好意思，因為在美國通常是自己處理好這類的事情。但無論如何，如此款待令人暖心。

不久，其他人也來了，接著我們圍坐在餐廳的大圓桌互相介紹。郭點傳師大致跟我們講述今日的流程，並回答了大家所提的疑問；流程包括說明辦道與清口的意義（假如有像後學一樣要立愿的人）、相關的禮節，以及讓大家互相交流的素食午餐。Carmen Cejudo 慈悲地以英文翻譯整個過程，並且和 Frank Lloyd 一起擔任保師。

在辦道禮之前，後學突然有所感觸，圍繞在這張桌子的人，來自不同的種族背景，但為了相同的理想——舉行道的傳承——而聚在一起。這使後學想到人們耳熟能詳的馬丁·路德·金恩牧師所發表的一場著名演講——「我有一個夢想」。或許有人不知道，金恩牧師的夢想就是要看到所有人，不論膚色、種族，都能融合在一起。對後學而言，我們這群人是那個夢想的（小）縮影。這是個十分特別的時刻，證明了「道」包容萬物的力量。

The Rituals

I would normally cover something like this in detail, but initiation is meant to be special and personal. In that spirit, I won't share any exact processes.

Here's what I *can* tell you:

Every person wishing to join I-Kuan Tao does so of their free will, and must profess that when joining. There is a process to ensure that only willing cultivators ask for initiation. The rituals involve standing, bowing, and some kneeling; however, accommodations are made for those who are physically unable to.

We ask for a meager Token of Merit upon initiation, to fund publishing of literature and other operation costs; there is no tithing whatsoever.

The Vow

During the Ching Ko ritual, the vow-taker proves their commitment in front of others, symbolizing their compassion for other sentient life. During this phase of the ceremony, I felt an odd warmth. The shrine wasn't particularly warm that day, and the ritual is a little strenuous, but nothing big. Nevertheless, it was a strange, intense warmth. It brought on some powerful emotions that I can't describe as anything but gratitude and joy. In a way, I was shedding parts of my former self. By the end of the ritual, I was feeling quite emotional but maintained my composure. I stood beside myself during the closing ceremony, pondering that feeling. I asked myself, "Did it mean something? Was I channeling the Tao I had just received from initiation? Is this the flow of chi?"

A smile wrapped around William's face when I told him about my experience. We were having quite the conversation over lunch, and he showed interest in telling others about what I experienced. It's still a mystery to me what exactly happened, but I hope others enjoy reading my story.

辦道禮

後學描述事情通常會詳細介紹每個細節，但傳道過程是殊勝且不宜宣揚的。在這原則下，後學不方便分享實際的過程。

後學可以向您述說：

每位想求道的人，都是自願前來的；求道時都必須宣誓是自願的。其中有個流程是確認有意願的修道人才得道。整個儀式包含：起立、鞠躬和一些跪拜動作，但仍會為身體不便的人做適當的調整。求道會被要求一次微薄的功德費，以供助印善書和道場運作的費用，並不須長期奉獻收入的一定比例。

清口愿

在清口當愿禮中，立愿人在仙佛與眾人之前表明他們認真承諾，象徵他們對於萬物生靈的同理心。在這片刻儀式中，後學感到異常的溫暖；中堂當天並沒有特別暖和，儀式雖然令人有些吃力，但沒有什麼大不了的。然而，這種奇異而炙熱的溫暖帶來一股強烈的情緒，除了感恩與喜悅之外，難以言述。某種層面上，後學正在擺脫過去的那個我。在儀式結束時，後學的內心十分激動但仍保持沉著。清口當愿後，後學兀自站立，忘我地思索那股感受；捫心自問：「這代表什麼意義嗎？難道後學貫通了剛才辦道禮中求得的道？難道這就是所謂氣的流動嗎？」

當後學告訴郭點傳師方才經歷的感受，一抹微笑掠過他的臉頰。我們在午餐時相談甚歡，他興致勃勃地向大家講述後學的經歷。這對後學而言仍是一道謎團，但後學欣然與大家分享。

Results

Since my initiation, I have lost over 20 lbs. My diet is simpler, more colorful, and more nourishing than before. I'm learning which of my words are harmful, and focusing on activities that enrich my life instead of attracting rain clouds of negativity. In general, my quality of life has improved. Although the Tao can be attributed, it couldn't have happened if I didn't come back home and stick to my vow. Living the Tao first hand has brought me to new lessons and helped me past obstacles that I could only dream about years ago. There's no doubt I couldn't do it without my own effort, but sometimes a little help is all you need. :)



▲ 工作之餘，不忘《道德經》。

結論

自求道以後，後學瘦了 20 磅（約 9 公斤）。日常飲食跟過去相較，變得更輕簡自然、更多采多姿、更營養富足。後學學習時時觀照那些不雅用語，專注在能豐富生命的活動，而不受負面情緒所牽引；總括而言，後學的生活品質改善了。或許可歸因於道的殊勝，但若回到家之後沒有反觀自照、遵循愿行，仍是無法改善的。道化生活的初體驗，帶給後學嶄新的人生課題，協助後學達成多年來遙不可及的夢想——克服障礙。毫無疑問地，如果自己不努力，不可能做到，但有時也需要別人一點小小的幫助。：)



▲ 享受大自然。

Closing

I went into the Tao with innocent curiosity. I expected the *Tao Te Ching* to be something old, dusty, and a bit boring, like other religious or philosophical texts I'd read before. What I found was a worldwide community of compassion, discipline, and humility. I have studied the Tao for eleven years, and I still feel like a young seedling on the grand stage of life. Just when you feel you've got it figured out, the Tao reminds you that over-confidence is dangerous. The Tao teaches us like a mother bird teaches her young to fly. It gives us everything we need to take flight. It's up to us to make it happen.

I am honored to formally join the worldwide community of I-Kuan Tao members and resume spiritual cultivation on the Great Path. I will always remember the hospitality of the Cheng family, feeding us and allowing us to use their personal home to transmit and discuss the Tao. I will also remember Master Chen and Master Kuo for their selfless sacrifice of time and energy, travelling up to Washington State from Los Angeles for the weekend! Lastly, I am grateful and humbled by the courtesy, respect, and support of fellow Tao cultivators, including Carmen Cejudo, Frank Lloyd, and my fellow initiates: Denise, Werku, Elijah, Nicholas, and Amber. It is one community that I've always felt welcome in, even during troubled times. May we meet again, sooner rather than later!

To wrap things up, I'd like to quote *Avatar's* sequel series, *The Legend of Korra*. In the final episode of the first season, Korra is able to reconnect with her past lives as the Avatar. She was only able to connect to her past lives after suffering a great loss, which shook her sense of identity. Aang is the first of her past lives to talk to her. What he says to her has stuck with me since initiation:

"When we are at our lowest point, we are open to the greatest change."

Thank you for accepting me and showing me The Way.

* <http://truetao.org/tao/ching-ko/>

(The End)

結語

後學會踏入「道」，是因為單純的好奇心。曾以為《道德經》就如同過往閱讀過的陳文舊典，或是枯燥乏味的宗教或哲學典籍。然而，後學所發現的卻是一個全球性的道場，充滿了熱情、修養與謙卑。後學研習「道」11年了，至今依然感覺像一粒小種子滋養於浩瀚的生命舞台中。正當您自認有所體悟，「道」卻在這時提醒您志得意滿的風險。「道」教導我們，就如同母鳥教導幼鳥飛行一般，給予我們學會飛行所需的一切，而未來能否振翅翱翔，卻又完全在於我們。

後學十分榮幸能加入遍及全球的「一貫道」，成為道場中的一員，並且在這條康莊大道上繼續靈性的修持。後學會永遠記得鄭壇主一家的好客，在熱情款待餐點之餘，還提供住家空間供我們傳道、論道。後學會永遠記得陳點傳師以及郭點傳師無私地奉獻自己的時間與精神，在週末期間由洛杉磯飛至華盛頓州！最後，萬分感恩各位學長的善意、尊重與支持，包括：Carmen Cejudo、Frank Lloyd，和後學修行的同伴：Denise、Werku、Elijah、Nicholas，以及 Amber。這是後學隨時回來都受到歡迎的道場，即便在後學艱困的時刻仍舊如此。願我們早日相會！

後學想要以「降世神通」的續集「科拉傳奇」做個結尾。在第一季的最後一集中，科拉有能力以神通連結她的前世過往；而這是她人生遭逢劇變以後才獲得的能力，這衝擊著她的自我認知。故事中，「科拉」的第一世——Aang 曾經對她說過一段話，這段話在後學求道以後深有感觸：

「當我們人生遭逢低谷，實是通向前所未有的改變。」

感恩接納後學，並指引後學「道」的方向。

註：<http://truetao.org/tao/ching-ko/>

（全文完）