



【文薈篇】海外來鴻

On Opening the Shrine

Part 2

by Bill Bunting

If we would one day overcome the ego self and bring forth the true Buddha nature, it is essential that we put into practice the principles taught us by the sages and masters. It is necessary at every turn to seek out opportunities to give of ourselves, our time, our resources, whatever is required of us without grumbling or complaining, in fact, we must meet those tasks with effortless joy and boundless energy. We should feel compelled to gather together to support each other, and mutually do our best to bring an end to the cycles of birth, death, and re-birth that plague humanity, it is our divine responsibility. It also is our divine responsibility to ensure that no soul is excluded from having the opportunity to know and embrace the truth. The mere appearance of differences between people must be seen for what it is, an illusion. The appearance of appearances must be seen for being the same illusion. Fat, short, skinny, blind, wheelchair bound, black, red, white, polka dotted or striped, everyone is welcome because the differences don't really exist. In short, we must learn to give genuinely, and live without separation. Who among us is capable of setting such an example? Well, I believe I personally know several such people.

Master Chen exemplifies these principles from the very core of his being,

and radiates his tremendous peace and presence to everyone who meets him. When I think of him, the picture is that of the quiet power of a very deep river, always moving but seemingly completely still. His ability to bring understanding and tranquility to complete chaos was demonstrated time and again in my home. Tolerance and compassion, and boundless joy mark this man as surely as his appearance. He carries himself in a floating elegant effortless fashion, and yet is as close to the earth as the flowers. His example is an inspiration to me every minute of every day, as I watched him nearly float through a crowd of Westerners who no more understood the Tao than the Chinese language, he was eloquent and articulate, eminently patient and kind, as gentle as the spring breeze but possessing tremendous inner strength and power. Here is a man whose friend and ally is the Great Tao.

How does he do all of this? He keeps the rituals, performs his meditations faithfully, he seeks out opportunities to give, in service, in resources, in time, in any way he can. He seeks out opportunities to share the Tao, and expresses himself with sheer joy. It is obvious to everyone without question that his way and path is Tao and no other. But his path came at some cost, discipline, education, choosing a way of peace, choosing to embrace people that perhaps were not as embraceable as others, choosing to show compassion when ignoring others would have been easier, choosing to help even if helping meant sacrifice. Over time, the choices became nature and the nature revealed itself in this remarkable man. This was not an accident.

Master William is a man full of enthusiasm and energy. Every obstacle is merely an opportunity to excel, every chasm of separation only a reason to build a bridge of understanding. His joy knows no limit, his patience is inexhaustible, his ability to move with the winds of change is effortless and graceful. When I think of people who genuinely desire to give, my mind's eye pictures Master William. Master William was instrumental in making sure that all of the fixtures of the shrine were delivered to Indiana in one piece. That single

simple sentence resulted in a tremendous amount of hard physical work, and a logistical nightmare of gathering packing wrapping and shipping. The crate that the fixtures arrived in was a five hundred and fifty pound work of art. Everything was meticulously packaged and arrived beautifully. This may not sound like a big accomplishment, but please take note, the items in this box are rare, some are irreplaceable, and all are priceless. The expense and labor involved in making this happen was truly ponderous in scale. In addition, Master William provided to the temples the ability to connect the shrines via broadband communications. Through his efforts, the infant shrine in Indianapolis has an umbilical to its mother shrine and the wonderful knowledge of its masters and teachers. I am positive that Master William's contributions extend much further than what I will ever know, and yet he shoulders this awesome responsibility with a quiet smiling face that beams with radiant joy and contentment and peace, ever ready to sit down and share his wisdom and knowledge of the Tao. This is an example worthy of following, a life worth emulating. This was also not an accident.

Derek Lin is my brother, I think of him like my own flesh and blood family. Without his support, guidance, nurturing, and recommendation, none of what I have written here would have been possible. Before we ever met in person there was a bond between us born in the Great Tao that descended from heaven and permeated our beings. His knowledge of the Tao is unsurpassed in any person I have met to date. His ability to share this vast reservoir of knowledge is combined with a tremendous nearly singular gift of making the ethereal and mystical, real and tangible, to the western culture where very frequently there are no words to describe what the Chinese masters have said. It is a difficult and often thankless task that far too often falls on deaf ears and hard hearts. Over time we have gotten to know each other well and the more I know Derek the more I am convinced that his source, his well is the Great Tao. Like the masters, his energy is boundless, his ability to pour himself out like water is without boundaries or limits I have not seen the end of his knowledge or his

ability to give.

When the shrine was dedicated, Derek presented a lesson, geared to the Western mindset that led thirteen people to be initiated, none of whom had heard anything of the I-Kuan Tao except from me. The power of his words, the conviction of his faith and knowledge, the joy in his voice and sparkle in his eye as he speaks, the unquestionable compassion for the people he speaks to all demonstrate a life rooted in the Great Tao that springs forth from within him and water and nourish every heart he touches.

As we work together technologically, I have had many opportunities to watch the way he redirects conflict and handles the varying opinions and ways of people, how he brings peace to those who want a fight, and refocuses those who have become confused. I have come to Derek several times and have come to trust him as a confidant, mentor and dear friend and brother. His hallmarks of honesty, integrity, forthrightness, faithfulness, wisdom, compassion and respect are truly worthy of emulation.

These are only three examples of a spirit that pervades I-Kuan Tao. If one were to approach any of these people and ask them, they would each say they are nothing special, that they don't do anything difficult or special. They would be telling the truth. For each of them, despite life's challenges, which we all face, they have chosen a life of self discipline, self control, humility, giving without expectation, sharing without limitation, studying and learning voraciously, keeping the rituals in their hearts homes and minds, in short, bringing forth their respective Buddha natures in this lifetime in this place for the benefit of others. None of these wonderful people and many others whom I have not written about yet, does these things accidentally. A life lived in this way is a day to day, sometimes second to second choice based in the absolute knowledge that this way is the way of truth.

There is no thought given about who they will share this great truth with,

they share it with everyone. I AM the proof. For those of you who don't know me, I'm an enormous American. I don't speak Chinese very well, and that's being very kind. I'm not what one would consider attractive, I'm not wealthy, in fact, in every way I'm pretty plain. In my heart though, exists the passion for the discovery of the truth, and the strong desire to share that truth and apply those principles in my life and help others do the same thing. That was all that was required of me. In many circles, it would have been reasonable, in fact practically expected to hear "He's not Chinese, how could he possibly do this?" No such words were ever spoken. Instead the group from the temple made videos for me to watch with the rituals recorded so I could see and hear and practice. Everyone, the young, old, attractive and plain, men, women and children all were welcomed, genuinely, lovingly, gently welcomed. Every person was valued and treated with attention and compassion and taught with wisdom and joy. It was a wonder to see and a blessing to be a part of. We all could have been on the South Pole, and if there had been people there it would have been no different.

Nothing that I have written about here came about by accident. Each of these wonderful people and many, many others have done this by choice and hard work that led to effortless grace. It is just so with any discipline. Mastering Tai-Chi, painting, music, gardening or anything else requires self discipline, self control, focus, education, practice, more than a few mistakes, and an unquenchable desire to succeed.

What better practice could we put ourselves into than those of compassion, wisdom, tolerance, giving, humility, respect for every living thing, forgiveness, meditation, peace, and harmony? What else could be more worthy of our attention and practice? What else would produce such tremendous benefit for ourselves and others? What else has the potential to end the cycle of birth and death and rebirth? Each of us can choose, either to live an accident, or to live the way of peace that is the Tao.