



The Ritual of Penance

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Translator : Eric Chen, Allen Chen

Sunday, June 24, 2012, marked a day of celebration. It was the Ritual of Penance here at the I-Kuan-Tao Temple in El Monte, CA. On this bright and sunny day, Tao cultivators, who enthusiastically congregated to what was an infrequent event of the Ritual of Penance. There were Masters who spoke and inspired us through their teachings that day. One of the themes I learned about was the importance of right mindedness. This is where it all begins! The Master spoke with such simplicity and joy. I was moved to tears. My tears felt like raindrops coming from the heavens. I could and couldn't understand it at the same time. This was not a moment of false sentimentality. It felt like true essence of being.

I was quite mystified as to his words of wisdom that were in reality just reminders of what is beautiful in the world. One can easily forget simple things like kindness and goodness. But it starts with intention. In order to see what is beautiful, right and sacred in this world, one must rid oneself of wrongs, of regrets and of the past. This is Penance: to pray and to recall our wrongdoings with sincerity and learning. This was the ultimate event of the day. After the Ritual of Penance, one lady member of the temple said to me "You have no idea how lucky you are". I responded to her "You're probably right". I could read in her words her meaning. As I recall having remembered receiving the Tao years prior and it having been a very life-transforming event, I knew exactly what she meant. This was evident immediately days after in my activities of everyday daily life. I walked away with a clearer mind and a more aware mind and a more conscientious mind. I, in turn, resolved a couple of conflicts that were perturbing me. I was just not in the right mind or had the right perception to see how I needed to be a better participant and not a judge.

I was fortunate enough to have received the Tao on April 11, 2004. Then on Saturday, June 23rd, 2012, Master Chen and Master Cheri conducted the Vegetarian Vow Ritual. This was the prerequisite for the Penance Ritual. Being vegetarian, now makes me think truly about what I eat and why. I never before connected what I ate with spirituality. But, what we do to our bodies reflects our spirituality, health, emotions, behavior and actions.

I felt at one with the group of Tao cultivators participating in the day's activities. It was comforting to be in community of people who come to learn, understand and live by these concepts. Many people helped put this event together, to which I'm grateful. Every detail in planning from the coordination of uniforms and the much needed translation to the many other details made this event seamless. And these same people care and support others in this spiritual journey realized.

懺悔儀式

◎ 美國全真道院 Alicia Romero

中譯 陳柏瑋 陳宣霖

2012年6月24日星期日標誌著一個值得紀念的日子。懺悔儀式在加州艾爾蒙地市全真道院舉行。在這個陽光燦爛的日子裏，道親們為了這次難得的懺悔班而聚集在一起。透過點傳師們的教誨，啟發我們當天的思考與學習。專題之一的「懺悔方案」，內容講述有關正確念頭的重要性及懺悔的方法。就是從這一刻開始的！點傳師簡單明瞭的講課讓後學充滿法喜，後學感動得哭了，流下的眼淚，感覺就好像來自天堂的雨滴。後學當下似懂非懂，這不是一個虛假感傷的時刻，但是這感覺就好像是後學明白了生命存在的真諦。

後學很讚歎點傳師的智慧，他的話真實地提醒後學，什麼是美麗的世界。人們可以很容易忘記簡單的事情，例如仁慈和善良的美德。不過，意念引發一切；我們必須先去除自身的錯誤、悔恨及過往，才能明白世上美好的、正當的以及莊嚴的一切。這是「懺悔」的定義：我們誠心誠意地表明並請求自己所犯的罪、過、錯被原諒。明白「懺悔」的真義是這一天最重要的事情。懺悔儀式結束後，一位坤道道親對後學說：「您不知道您是多麼的幸運。」後學回答她：「您可能是對的。」後學能聽懂她話中的意思。回想起在多年前求道的時候，因為求道而轉化與改變了後學的生命，所以後學很清楚地知道她的意思。大懺悔班結束幾天後，後學立即明顯地感覺到自己在每天日常生活中的轉變。後學理出了一個清晰的、明智的和更謹慎的想法來解決與處理擾亂後學的幾個矛盾衝突；後學之前只是沒有正確的觀念和看法來理解應該如何做一個好的參與者，而不是一位法官。

後學有幸在2004年4月11日求道，然後在2012年6月23日星期六由陳正夫點傳師及徐翠好點傳師引領後學立清口愿——求道與素食，這兩項是參加大懺悔班的必要條件。身為素食主義者，讓後學開始認真地思考後學平常所吃的食物及為什麼吃這些食物。後學以前從未想過自己吃的食物也與靈性有關聯。但是，現在後學明白當我們對自己的身體做了什麼，會反映在我們的靈性、健康、情感、行為和行動上。

後學在參加大懺悔班的時候，深深覺得自己是道場的一份子。令人欣慰的是道親們藉由這次的機會共同來學習、明白並實行這些道理。後學很感恩道親們同心協力地策畫這個大懺悔班，從制服、英文翻譯及其他許多細節的協調規劃，使得大懺悔班圓滿完成。感恩點傳師們及道親們的用心成全，讓大家在這次的心靈精神旅程之中有所體悟了解。