

How Dharma transformed Michael

By: Michael Pace.

My religious learning was at a French Catholic college, the Brothers of St. Joseph. We were daily taught the Catholic Catechism, which to this day I forget what it was all about, I have no clear understanding of it.

However the only thing that had any affect on me was the ten commandments, which I have followed more or less in my life. Still there were many questions that the priests that taught us generally evaded, especially if the question was about the spirit side of religion. Questions that persisted in my mind, until I came to this country and one night experienced an out-of-body manifestation, during a bout of depression and immersed myself into deep prayer.

This was my second experience into the supernatural. My first was when I was thirteen years old, I saw an apparition and in broad daylight. This happened at a haunted house in which we lived. These two happenings are still deeply embedded in my memory.

Not long after when my family arrived to this country, a wonderful person came into my life. A very dear friend indeed. A kind, educated man who migrated from Finland. It was he who introduced me to yoga, and handed me a book by Sri Sivananda called Raja Yoga. This book opened a new vista upon life and gave me an insight to my questions about life's mysteries. From here on we both progressed to Theosophy, where we delved into all religions and sects. I became immersed into the occult sciences, which were also linked to religion. Every religion has its mystical side, but most religions I suspect evade it, and teach the very basics of their philosophy.

The study of the mind became mine and my friend's most important subject to investigate. This study took me into the history of Patanjali and yoga, then briefly upon the Upanishads and Hinduism.

Ultimately into Buddhism. This philosophy struck a note with me, it was just what I was looking for for my salvation, so to speak.

I finally was introduced to Taoism, by a Chinese Australian friend, into which I became fully involved in the last fifteen years. Taoism belongs to the C'han branch of Buddhism, and Zen in Japan. This teaching and practice completely transformed me. I started to experience a change in me with regard to my attitude towards others. I became calmer, more kinder and thoughtful. Others have also noticed it. I find that I have discarded my old self; that is eliminating thoughts of hatred, discrimination, likes and dislikes, lying, covetousness greed. I realized that only by purifying oneself, can you realize and know the Great Spirit within us. To conquer the outside, the universe, one must conquer himself, by the willpower given to us, one can conquer his wayward mind. I have now a very deep faith in the spiritual teachings of all religions, overlooking its failings as recent happenings have revealed. My faith has given me peace of mind, an understanding of myself, which

I did not know previously.

I am not perfect yet, because of perhaps some still lingering karma, which one has to confront and clear away. So, the message is to get to know yourself, and reverse unwholesome tendencies that obstruct from knowing your True self, and gain the happiness and peace of mind we all deserve.

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