

The Path to Awakening: A Story about Cooking Live Eels

覺醒之路：活煮鱧魚的故事

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By Guo Ting (Martin) Verhoeven Excerpted from *Red Lotus Abound in the Valley of a Thousand Mountains*,
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佛子 中譯 Translated into Chinese by Fo Zi

One layman's story in particular comes to mind:

He was a young, well-educated, urbane businessman from Vancouver. Although his parents were Buddhist, he never felt any inclination to the religion, although he retained spiritual longings. Ironically, it was the very teaching he resisted and resented most in Buddhism that brought about his transformation: vegetarianism. One night, as we sat around the Master, he told his story.

He was a gourmand. He loved to eat meat—the most fragrant, tasty delicacies of pork, beef, fowl, and seafood. Over time, this "lust for flavor" as he called it, became something of an obsession. He grew increasingly less and less satisfied with store-bought meats. Only fresh-killed animals would satisfy his palate; and the quest for fresher and fresher flavor sensation began to consume his every waking moment. He would shop only at the fresh food markets of Chinatown and the coastal waterfront docks of Vancouver for the catch-of-the-day. He joined a gourmet club and found companionship in fellow gourmards who took turns hosting the others for gourmet banquets.

One evening he was filled with a craving for fresh eel. He stopped at a Chinatown market, bought two live eels and put them into a large white plastic pail in the back of his car. On the drive home he thought only of the exquisite meal he planned to cook with eel killed only seconds before cooking, or even cooked alive. Unconsciously he found himself speeding in his car as his mouth watered and his mind raced ahead to dinner. He rushed in the front door and set the water boiling on the stove, while the eels splashed around in the open pail now on his kitchen floor. In his frenzy to seize the optimal flavor sensation, he inadvertently knocked over the pail as the herb-seasoned broth came to a boil. The eels writhed and wiggled across his floor, under the table, beneath the sink. He

我想起了一位居士的故事。

來自溫哥華，是有知識的都市年輕生意人。雖然父母是佛教徒，但他從不信任任何宗教，然而仍有一些宗教憧憬。很諷刺的，佛教裡他最反對與厭惡的事，竟成為他轉變為素食者的因緣。有一天晚上，我們坐在上人旁邊，聽他說自己的故事。

他是美食主義者，愛吃肉——尤其是最香甜美味的豬肉、牛肉、鳥肉、海鮮。總之，正如他自己形容的，有「渴求口感」的執著。市場上買來的肉已越來越不能滿足他，唯有現宰的肉才能滿足味覺；日後對更新鮮肉的索求，便成為每日醒來必做的事。他只去中國城買現宰的新鮮肉，或跑去海邊的碼頭倉庫買當日抓到的鴨。他同時參加了美食俱樂部，也找到同伴來輪流主辦美食聚餐會。

有一天傍晚，他渴求吃新鮮鱧魚，跑去了中國城買了兩條活的鱧魚，放在車子後箱裡的大塑膠筒內。一路上，邊開車邊盤算著如何活煮或現殺鱧魚，隨著腦子裡晚餐的情境，他不自覺口水直流，而且加緊油門。衝到家門口，把鍋裝滿了水加熱待滾；此時放在廚房的兩條活蹦亂跳鱧魚，已從打開了蓋子的桶子溜到地板上。他狂亂猛抓鱧魚，絆倒了筒子，當時鍋裡調味料的水幾乎開始沸騰。鱧魚一會兒在地上翻騰著，一會兒又到桌底下、在水槽下，他根本抓不到！每一次好不容易抓到了一隻，就又從手中溜了出去。

couldn't catch them. Each time he caught hold of one, it slipped out of his grasp, slithering away.

Soon he found himself on his hands and knees, still in his business suit, crawling and clawing his way across the kitchen floor, frantically chasing down the panic-stricken, thrashing eels. Then, as he rounded the room's corner in hot pursuit of one of the eels, he saw his reflection in a full-length mirror hanging in an open closet door. He was shocked, horrified to see his own image—wild eyed, sweating, flushed-red face, huffing and puffing, grunting like a predatory beast, down on his haunches pursuing its quarry!

"My god," he thought, "I am no better than an animal! I no longer resemble a person, a civilized being. I have become what I desire to eat, only worse because I should know better." He was transfixed, almost paralyzed by the distorted image he beheld in the mirror; like Dr. Jeckyl beholding Mr. Hyde. He barely recognized himself and felt deep shame and remorse. He said, "At that moment, I decided to become a vegetarian and a Buddhist. This is why I came to your monastery today and will continue to come. I finally understand. . . really understand. I only hope it's not too late."

This is the true story he related to us.

很快，發現自己還穿著西裝在地上爬行，瘋狂追逐驚恐而抽蓄的鱔魚。在房角急抓一條鱔魚時，從衣櫥上一面鏡子，被自己的模樣嚇呆了：眼睛睜得大大的、滿頭大汗、通紅的臉，激怒而急喘，就如同獵物者虎視眈眈著獵物！

「老天啊！」他想：「我沒有比禽獸好到那裡！再也不像人、文明人了。已經變成我要吃的那個東西，而且只有更糟，因為我應該更清楚！」面對著鏡中扭曲的形象，就像捷克羅博士注視著海德先生一樣，他看穿了自己，幾乎完全崩潰了，認不出自己，而且感到無限的慚愧和自責。

「就在那時候，我決定吃素，成為佛教徒。這就是為什麼今天會來寺院，而且以後會繼續來。我終於瞭解了……，真的瞭解了！只希望不會太遲！」

這是真人真事。