



*Zen Master Wu Bong*

Beyond the obvious congratulations to Zen Master Soeng Hyang, I want to talk a little bit about the past.

When we started, we were just a group of people practicing together with our teacher, and then we made, officially, a Zen Center. And at that time it was just one Zen Center, Providence Zen Center. Then, soon, other people appeared, and they started groups which later became Zen Centers and this teaching started to spread out in the United States. And then somebody appeared first from Spain and took the teaching to Spain and then Poland appeared, and so on and so on, and finally all over the world.

At some point, a school was formed. In the early days, the School was totally dependent, really, on just one person, and that was Zen Master Seung Sahn. Actually if he walked away, everything would have disappeared at that time, both in terms of motivation, and in terms of money. We were very dependent on his effort.

I think it's really interesting also that, now, three years after his death, three years actually since Zen Master Soeng Hyang has been the School Zen Master, we are doing the ceremony, and as Zen Master Dae Kwang said, now it's kind of officially approved. Actually, Zen Master Seung Sahn never had the ceremony. I guess we never officially approved him as the School Zen Master. So this is the first Zen Master Installation Ceremony in the history of our school.

What this means is that the school doesn't depend, actually, on any one person anymore. I remember in the early days we already made the School, and we had the Board of Directors, and were trying to make a very simple decision, which was the School logo. And after two years of meetings and discussing for hours and hours various proposals and having committees, doing drawings, and so on, after two years of this, one of the students went to Zen Master Seung Sahn, and in less than one minute we had a logo. So we were not so capable, and again, if at that time we didn't have him, we probably would have dissolved.

I think it's a sign of great maturity that we can have this installation ceremony today. So the congratulations is not just to Zen Master Soeng Hyang, but the real congratulations is to all of you, to all of us for making the School a reality. Because, from now on, I think it's a very viable organization which can continue, and it doesn't matter who will be the School Zen Master in the future, it will continue even after that and after that and after that. That's my wish for all of us. Thank you very much. ☸

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