

Note: The following two articles were speeches given on September 27, 2016 at the 25th Anniversary Celebration for Kwan Lin Chan Lin in Singapore. (The temple name literally means “Kwan Um Zen Monastery.”)

Man of the Mountains

Gye Mun Sunim JDPS

Originally coming from the mountains,
Speaking in the mountain tongue.
Hawking pine breeze in May,
Priceless in the human realm.
—*Mengan Siyue*

I am a man of the mountains who likes to speak in the mountain tongue. City folks, if you do not understand, do not blame me. In the heat of May, I bring the cool pine winds from the mountains. City folks, I am afraid you do not know how to put a price to it!

“Originally coming from the mountains, speaking in the mountain tongue.” Who is the man from the mountains? What is the language of the mountains, the mountain tongue?

This is a metaphor. It means that both you and I have the mind of the Buddha, we are people of the mountains and the sound of truth is the mountain tongue. When the cool pine winds, which arise from the emptiness of all dharmas, blow onto the burning vexations that plague the human realm—that is truly priceless! Those who understand do not even need to fork out a single cent. Close your eyes and look inward. There, you will find a limitless



Photo: KYCL Archives

source of cool breeze.

Five fives is twenty five. What is “five fives is twenty-five”?

As Kwan Yin Chan Lin celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, we have a poem to share with everyone:

Originally coming from the mountains,
Speaking in the mountain tongue.
Hawking pine breeze in May,
Priceless in the human realm.
Five fives is twenty-five.

What is “Five fives is twenty-five”? Investigate!

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Warning! There Is a Tiger Loose!

Zen Master Dae Kwang

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Kwan Yin Chan Lin. Traditionally, we measure our lives with anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, graduations . . . many kinds of remembrances. However, in the end, it’s not how many anniversaries we’ve had or how long we’ve been here that’s important. What’s important is what you did with your time. The same is true of Buddhist temples and Zen centers.

In the early nineties I was fortunate enough to accom-

pany Zen Master Seung Sahn to Singapore on a teaching trip. I had met a very interesting and sincere monk from Singapore in the late 1980s in Korea, and now we were going to visit him. His name was Gye Mun Sunim.

After our arrival we were sent off in a very small boat to an island to pay a visit to his temple. As the boat landed I noticed a banner hanging above the dock, which read, “Warning! There is a tiger loose on the island.” Coming from America I was quite shocked. I was used to bears and



Photo: KYCL Archives

snakes, but tigers—that’s a whole different story! It turned out that a tiger had swum from Jahor over to Pulau Ubin and was scaring the local residents. Fortunately, we made it to the temple alive and were able to have tea with Sunim.

It’s amazing to look back now and consider how Kwan Yin Chan Lin has grown over the last 25 years. But, whether located on a undeveloped island, in Bukit Timah, on Lavender Street, or in Geylang, the direction of Kwan Yin Chan Lin has always been the same: Provide clear teaching and help the world. Only a clear and dedicated leader can inspire something like that to happen year-in and year-out. That’s the true tiger!

Nevertheless, we all know that in human realms nobody does anything by themselves. Without the support of a dedicated and sincere sangha Kwan Yin Chan Lin would not be possible. Our Zen center has been able to do its work all these years through the dedication and hard work of a large number of people. Happy anniversary, Kwan Yin Chan Lin—all of you! ♦

8] I Still Don’t Understand My True Self

Interviews with Zen Master Wu Bong

Eduardo del Valle Pérez

When I was a young Zen student, I was very interested in checking if it was true that great masters were always keeping a not-moving mind. I entered the interview room, bowed in front of Zen Master Wu Bong and sat in front of him.

He asked, “Do you have any questions?”

I suddenly jumped over him very fast, shouting “*Aah-hhggg!*” And I grabbed his neck tightly and shouted at him, “*Give me the money!*”

Zen Master Wu Bong kept completely quiet. His body didn’t move even one millimeter. He just smiled while I was grabbing his neck and very kindly asked me, “How much do you need?”



During a dharma talk at the Palma Zen Center, Zen Master Wu Bong explained that our body is not our true self. Then, when I went to the interview room I asked him, “During the dharma talk, you said that our body is

not our true self, but in the *Song of Dharma Nature* the great patriarch said, “This empty delusory body is the very body of the Buddha.” So why do you make a distinction between our body and our true self?”

Zen Master Wu Bong looked down at the floor and smiled like a child who has been caught stealing candy in a shop. He looked at me with that smile, happy to have a student confronting him. Then he said “It is just a teaching style I’m using.”



At the end of 1992, before he had received dharma transmission, I asked Jacob Perl JDPSN (who would later become Zen Master Wu Bong), “Teacher, why have you not received transmission?” He seemed humbled, looked away from me for a moment and then looked at the floor. He suddenly became sad and said to me very softly, “Zen Master Seung Sahn said to me that I don’t still understand my true self.” A few months later, he got transmission from Zen Master Seung Sahn. ♦