

# The True Spirit of Zen

## Zen Master Dae Jin

The celebration of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin Zen building inauguration and the 22nd anniversary is an auspicious event for the Singaporean sangha and all people. From the simple, humble beginnings of the KYCL community on the island of Pulau Ubin in 1990, KYCL has now grown into a vital force that hopes to open its doors wide to the public and revitalize the Zen practice in Singapore. There is no secret to revitalizing the Zen school other than to encourage the practice of meditation by all people.



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

In the year 2005, Kwan Yin Chan Lin hosted the event known as the Whole World Is a Single Flower (WWSF) Zen conference, which took place at Suntec Singapore. During this event many great teachers and sangha members from around the world participated. At the time, the president of Singapore, Mr. S. R. Nathan, requested to meet with the leaders of the WWSF event for some tea and discussion. The meeting took place at the presidential office within the Istana compound. I was fortunate to be there when President Nathan met with us. What I remember most from that meeting was that while drinking tea, he told us: "I am reading the Chinese newspaper every day. Although it is not my native tongue, I am trying to improve my understanding of Chinese and stay abreast of the events in the Chinese community." It was refresh-

ing to hear that he was still trying to learn and improve on his Chinese! Even though holding the most senior position of president, he was not required to do that. Of course, being the senior statesman that he was, there would have been plenty of people happy to translate the Chinese for him. However, the fact that he chose to continue to learn this himself and to challenge himself with this impressed me deeply.

The true spirit of Zen is to never stop learning, and never stop challenging ourselves to improve upon our past accomplishments. However much we have achieved before, there are always new areas for us to learn and attain. In order to revitalize Zen, we must first attain our true spirit. That is the way that the great Zen masters of the past have showed us through their lives. Korean people have a saying: "Aim high in your official position, but humble your mind." Great Zen Master Seung Sahn spoke like this when he told his close disciples, "Just before harvest, the ripe rice hangs its head low." That is the Zen spirit that the president has shown us, and is also the spirit of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin. Thank you for all your hard training, Ven. Chi Boon and the people of Singapore.

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# Un Mun's Body Exposed in the Golden Wind

## Zen Master Dae Jin

*Mu Sang Sa Temple, Summer 2013*

A monk once asked Zen Master Un Mun, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?"

Un Mun replied, "Body exposed in the Golden Wind."

Here we have the great Chinese Zen Master Un Mun being asked about the time when the leaves all fall off the trees and the branches wither, that is, they become small and short. Maybe in Singapore this does not happen because the trees are always green and the branches are always long! We know that this is not the case, and the tree will someday change its leaves and drop its old branches too. Usually this happens in the autumn season when the moon is shining brightly and the weather is cooling down.

Just like the trees changing their leaves and branches, we

human beings also have to change our clothes and adapt to the conditions. Only wearing the same clothes every day is not possible or helpful. When we change our clothes our true "body" is exposed! Exposed in the Golden wind? Golden wind means the precious wind of change. This means adapting to conditions, following the situation however odd it may seem. When we do this we grow and get wisdom.

Waiting for the Golden Wind is our usual condition. But, if you only wait for it to blow your way, you will just grow old and fat. Now! Look carefully! In front of you the fall moon is reflected brightly, and a clear wind blows lightly on the face.

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