

FROM DRAGON FLOWER MOUNTAIN

**Kwan Yin at Lytton**

Rev. Master Kōten

Someone must have brought You here,  
wished for a place and made the wish concrete;  
a door to heaven and a place to ask,  
to be heard;  
where prayer could be valid.  
This is the story.

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Who brought You here  
or were you coming anyway;  
assuage the gold lust,  
turn a good deed,  
listen to the prayers of a prostitute or two?  
Or help heal a heart sick, home sick  
young man.

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Far have You come  
yet not so far to You  
for whom everywhere is at home,  
the ten directions flowering.

Who called to You,  
spoke in the night,  
dark with fears and  
unexpected wants?

I too call.

Quench my uneasy fears,  
load my heart with courage  
for to journey  
and come with me  
at least part of the way.

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Kwan Yin at Lytton,  
rivers flow,  
trees escape the rocks,  
Jade in the water,  
Hear the sad blood mixing  
and descend.

On a rock, near the River,  
She was seen.  
Can you believe-  
will you have faith-  
going just halfway to meet?

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## Nigra sum et Formosa

Rev. Master Kōten

Rev. Master Jiyu would often speak about the importance of being careful how you use "and" or "but" in a sentence - including and excluding - sameness and difference. It was one of the ways she taught us to be aware of our attitudes of mind in daily life.

In the original Hebrew of the Song of Solomon in the Bible the text says "I am Black and Beautiful, O Ye daughters of Jerusalem." The early translations into Latin say "Nigra sum et formosa" (Black am I and Beautiful).

When a later translation was done the word "et" (and) was changed to "sed" (but) making the phrase read "Black am I but Beautiful". The "but" has remained in almost all translations of the Bible to this very day.

Consider carefully the consequences of that simple change of just two letters ("e" remained constant, "t" was removed, "s" and "d" substituted).

This phrase from the Song of Solomon is not as obscure as it might seem and indeed, was well known and quoted especially in defense of slavery in the American South.

I first became aware of this from a movie in which a black slave woman is mistress to a white man. In the bedroom she stretches up to her full height and says aloud "I am Black and Beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" The man replies "In my Bible it says "but". The woman just stretches herself again and proclaims, "I am Black and Beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!"

That woman truly made a lion's roar.

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I think every one can see my point