

Same Day, Same Time Together Become Buddha

Zen Master Seung Sahn

Question: Recently I traveled in India. Everywhere I went, people were suffering because of a lack of food. I wanted to help them but I had nothing to give them—there were too many people and so much suffering. I realized I could do nothing.

Zen Master Seung Sahn: You have everything. You say “nothing,” but that isn’t correct. You don’t understand “you,” so you say “nothing.”

Q: But I had nothing to give them.

ZMSS: You are only attached to “outside”; you don’t understand “inside.” Outside you have nothing, but inside you have everything. If you have nothing on the outside to give them, then everywhere you go bow and chant Kwan Seum Bosal. Also, in your mind keep “I can!” Then this helps them, and also helps you. You have “that,” yeah?

Everything happens from primary cause, condition and results. Our world has a problem. So Buddha said this is a suffering world. In the United States, we have a lot of food. And every day we throw a lot of food in the garbage. It’s the same in Korea. But in India, there isn’t enough food. So, our world is unbalanced. Who makes things unbalanced? Human beings make this.

Nowadays there are too many human beings. Also, humans do many bad things. For example, humans kill a lot of animals and eat them—eat their meat. Then cause and effect are very clear. All suffering comes from cause and effect. If two religions are fighting—like Hinduism and Islam—then many people will be killed. Then these people reappear again. The suffering goes around and around. Everything is from primary cause, condition and effect.

Q. Right now there is a lot of fighting going on in Bosnia. In a situation like that, is merely practice enough or should we do something more?

DSSN. A cat and a dog are fighting in front of you. What can you do?

Q. [Action of pulling them apart.]

DSSN. Correct! But, in Bosnia you don’t have any power so you can’t do that there. If you don’t have any power, what can you do? Buddha teaches us that if you don’t have power you should borrow Buddha’s power. So, every day you should do special chanting—Kwan Seum Bosal—for this country. If you do that every day for one hour then your power appears. That is very important because your Kwan Seum Bosal energy is absolute energy. Their fighting energy is opposites energy. Absolute energy shines in your consciousness. O.K.? That helps this world. So, what’s our job?

Our job is to practice hard and perceive this world. Humans do more bad actions on this planet than any other living thing. How can we help? Our consciousness

and suffering people’s consciousness must connect. Then we can help. If you only practice for yourself, that’s not correct practicing. Our practicing means attain your true self. Attain your true self means Great Love, Great Compassion, the Great Bodhisattva Way. In other words, moment to moment keep correct situation, correct relationship and correct function. If we don’t have enough money to help people, then we chant for them. Chant Kwan Seum Bosal many times and say, “Please may all suffering human beings and all suffering animals be relieved of suffering. Same day, same time! Together become Buddha.” That’s our direction. This direction never ends, lifetime after lifetime. That’s our great vow. So, if we see suffering people, then we chant for them. That’s our job. O.K. ?

Zen Master Seung Sahn is founding teacher of the international Kwan Um School of Zen. ☸



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