

Hermitage of the Five-Year-Old

Zen Master Su Bong

August 1993

Each moment is preparation for the next moment. Every moment in our life this universe is telling us what to do. This red man on the stop light said, "Don't walk." Then the green man said "Go." The green man said "Go" but the bus is coming and is not stopping. This bus said to you "Stop."

There are two little dogs. One dog is a very nice dog and said, "Touch me on the head." Another dog has rabies, a kind of dog sickness, with foam coming out of his mouth. This foam on the dog's mouth is telling you to climb a tree. Every moment, this world is telling us what to do. If human beings can see that, then our life is very easy.

Long ago, on the highest mountain in Korea, there was one hermitage where only one monk and one small

boy, a five-year-old boy, lived together. Even today, to come down from this mountain to buy rice takes about six hours, and eight hours to go up. Only this monk and small boy lived there three hundred years ago.

One day, the monk said to the orphan boy, "Today, I must go down to the village to buy some rice and food. Very early in the morning, I will be going, and then late in the evening, I will come back. In the kitchen, I have made for you some lunch, so if you are hungry, go to the kitchen and eat. Also if you are afraid of anything, you chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . then Kwanseum Bosal will come and help you." Then this boy said, "Yes, I will do that."

The monk went to the village to get supplies. In the afternoon, he wanted to return to the hermitage to the

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Photo: Francis Lau

orphan boy, but a storm appeared and snow was coming down. Then he said, "Oh, very difficult, but I must go." He put all the supplies on his back and began walking up the mountain. The snow was very thick and he could not see where he was going, but he only tried. Very soon, the snow was taller than him, so he could not continue. The next day he tried again, but it was also very heavy snow. Then he thought to himself, "What shall I do? I cannot go, but what is my orphan boy doing?" In his mind, he was only thinking about this small boy.

One week passed, two weeks passed, three weeks passed, one month passed. Then two months, three months passed. Finally came springtime, the snow was melting a little bit, and he could leave. All the way up the mountain, he was only thinking about this boy, and inside him he was very sad. He also thought, "What will I find when I get there? I made a big mistake, and what can I do?"

As he got to the small hermitage, he heard noises inside, "dong, dong, dong . . ." and one voice. This voice said, "Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . ." Then he heard that sound, he was very afraid, thinking that it was a demon that came to punish him, because he did not take responsibility for the boy.

But he must go in, so as he opened the door, the young boy came rushing outside, "Sifu, Sifu . . ." This monk was very surprised. First, he thought it was an illusion or maybe this boy's ghost, and was very afraid, but this boy jumped onto Sifu's neck and hugged him. Then this monk touched him. "You're real!" and the boy said, "Yah, this is me, this is me, this is me." The monk asked, "How did you survive this winter? You have no food. Also, you have no fire."

The young boy said, "Sifu, you said that if I'm afraid, only chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . I was never afraid. When I was hungry, I was chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . and Kwanseum Bosal gave me food. When I was cold, I was chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . and my body became warm."

This boy's speech hit, even shocked his teacher's mind. This monk said to himself, "I always give this advice to everybody, but I never really believed that myself 100 percent. Yet this young boy just did it 100 percent." So they changed this temple's name to "Hermitage of the Five-Year-Old" in honor of this five-year-old boy. Even today once a year, many people make a long journey to this "Hermitage of the Five-Year-Old." If they want something, they only go to this hermitage and chant Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal. That's a true story.

Now you have a good life and you don't have any problem and that's a treasure for you. This Kwanseum Bosal is a treasure for you, which you keep in a treasure box. Someday when you need this Kwanseum Bosal treasure,

you use it, OK? Only chanting Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal, Kwanseum Bosal . . . and because Kwanseum Bosal is free, you can use it anytime.

I hope sometime if you need that, you don't forget it. Then you can use it any place, any time. If you use it, don't check. "Oh, now I did that for 10 minutes, what is the result? Is it working, not working?" Don't check, just do it. Then it becomes very clear for you. That's Kwanseum Bosal's present for you. ♦

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<http://www.subong.org.hk/sites/default/files/share/files/resource/eng-wake-up.pdf>

South Florida Zen Group Fifteenth Anniversary Poem

Host and guest
 Breathe the same air
 Walk the same earth
 In their own shoes

One size fits one
 No size fits all
 Originally no movement
 Inside, everyone
 Wiggles their own toes

In the land of perpetual
 Mangoes and alligators
 Only one question

How has it lasted
 Fifteen years?

Those who walk
 The path together
 Understand

Breakfast
 Kimchee and oatmeal
 Lunch
 Seaweed soup

Kam Sa Ham Ni Da
 Song Bul Ha Ship Shi Yo

—Ken Kessel JDPSN

