Today, we are commemorating the day Guanyin left home, so I'm going to tell a Guanyin story.

Around the time we purchased the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB), I owned a motorcycle. I had to make frequent trips back and forth between Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco and CTTB. Each trip would take approximately two and a half hours. So I had been thinking to myself and entertained a false thought: if I were to buy a bike to complete these trips, I would actually save a lot of gas. So I asked Shr Fu [Ven. Master], “Might I use the money that my mother is holding for me to buy a motorcycle?”

Shr Fu was very compassionate and said, “OK, if you want to do that, go ahead.” So I bought this motorcycle. I started driving it, but I soon realized that highway 101 was not motorcycle friendly. There were way too many cars and I did not feel comfortable riding. So instead, I switched to highway 37, a side road that was parallel to highway 101. It was a windy, two-lane road. In a sense, it was a safer one; I wouldn't be driving as fast.

One day, I was going south from CTTB and about halfway down highway 37, I saw a person standing in the middle of the road. He was an American Indian. He had his hair tied in the back, and he was wearing beads. He was an older man and looked very wise. As I approached, he put his arms up and motioned for me to slow down and stop. Once I had stopped, he said to me: “You must be very careful, further down the road. There's a large oil spill, and you could lose control of your bike and crash it. I wanted to warn you.”
I thanked him heartily, slowed down, and went on my way.

Later, when I returned to see Shr Fu again, I told him about the incident. I mentioned the American Indian standing in the middle of the road, and Shr Fu said, “No, no, no. That was not an Indian. That was Guanyin. Don’t you know Guanyin can manifest as anything? Guanyin came to help you out.” A few weeks after I told the story, Shr Fu came and said to me: “You know, it is probably a good idea for you sell this motorcycle. I had a little talk with Guanyin and all the Dharma protectors are complaining that you are taking too much of their time. It would not look very good for the Buddhadharma if you crashed your motorcycle.” I got the message and sold the bike shortly after. (Incidentally, I was able to sell the bike at a higher price than the purchase price.)

What I wanted to say here is this: Shr Fu always told us that when we are driving we should recite Guanyin’s name. It serves as a blessing to help out all the road demons. There are many road demons and ghosts on the highway. They are the wandering souls and solitary spirits of people who crashed and did not survive the accident. They are still out there looking for a “substitute” [someone to take their place so they can be released]. So it is a good idea to mindfully recite while driving. Furthermore, reciting the holy name also keeps you from getting angry on the road. People can get very frustrated behind the wheel by impatient and inconsiderate drivers, so it is a good idea to recite for this reason as well.

That was my little story. Amitofo.

Non-harming of Any Living Creature: The Key that Unlocks the Door to Spiritual Progress

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Chinese translated by Chiang-Ching Lin, Ph.D.