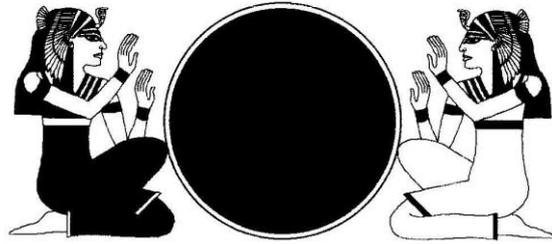


Temple of the Dark Moon



Kuan Yin: Mother of Compassion

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Kuan Yin is one of the most beloved of Deities in the Chinese Buddhist tradition known as Mahayana (“Great Vehicle”). As “Kuan” means *Earth* and “Yin” is the dynamic female life force, Kuan Yin is honoured as the Holy Mother of compassion and mercy. She is also said to personify “karuna”, boundless compassion, and that her strength, like silk, is disguised in softness.

Kuan Yin is a bodhisattva, a being who hesitates to enter the state of Nirvana because they wish to save the suffering of humanity. Just as the Virgin Mary captured many hearts of the Catholic faith, the popularity of Kuan Yin far outweighs that of any male bodhisattva.

Considered the guardian angel of humans and the patroness of mothers and seamen, Kuan Yin is often depicted sitting on a lotus, the flower of enlightenment, with a child next to her. Many people believe that even to say the Goddess's name will bring protection of relief to those in need of her help.



One legend says that before she became a Goddess, Kuan Yin was known as Miao Shan, the youngest of three daughters of a cruel father. When she saw her father force her sisters to marry unkind but wealthy husbands, Miao Shan expressed her desire to enter a Buddhist temple and become a nun instead. Her father agreed, but secretly ordered the temple residents to give his daughter the hardest chores to do in order to discourage her. Miao Shan

ended up having so much work to do that after toiling all day, she then had to work all night while others slept.

But the animals that lived near the temple saw the hardships Miao Shan was under and decided to help her. The tigers gathered wood for the fire. The snakes brought water to the temple. The birds collected vegetables from the garden, while the spirit of fire cooked food for everyone. News of these miracles spread from the lonely temple and eventually reached her cruel father. In a hurry, he set fire to the temple, but Miao Shan put out the fire with her hands alone, without suffering a single burn. Finally, her father gave orders for her to be killed for disobedience.

After her death, Miao Shan was brought to Heaven where her purity of heart and mercy towards others transformed her into the Goddess Kuan Yin. Just as she was about to cross the threshold into Heaven, she heard a cry from someone suffering down on Earth. Kuan Yin asked to be sent back to Earth to help anyone in need. She vowed never to leave until the last human being was free from pain. It was such a decision that elevated her to the state of a bodhisattva.



Kuan Yin's gift of tranquillity is the secret that is no secret - the potential for deep understanding, compassionate wisdom and courageous, empowered action are present within us at all times. Each of us is born from wholeness - conception and completion at the centre of the seed. Accepting and honouring all of who we are is Kuan Yin's healing power of compassion at play.

The lotus, or waterlily, often symbolises Kuan Yin. Beautiful and fragrant, it floats upon the waters like the soul should float upon the divine essence. It is also a symbol of purity and grace arising from the unlikely mud of ordinary reality. Both the blue lotus, signifying rebirth of the pure land, and the white lotus, signifying a pure soul, are among her symbols. Although not unique to Kuan Yin, the lotus is a powerful image of her spiritual significance.

Kuan Yin is also associated with water. She is said to live on a magical island surrounded by the ocean, as many legends show her taking special interest in rescuing sailors and fishermen. And when she offers us her compassion, it takes the form of a shower of unearthly water.

Kuan Yin was honoured at shrines that are usually situated near water and surrounded by a grove of trees. Her followers honour her in simple rituals as they share their troubles and

concerns. Once she had granted their requests, simple prayer of thanks are then returned to her.

Many people believe that the magickal art of chanting Kuan Yin's name can help to gain comfort. While there are many chants praising Kuan Yin, the most significant is the "Ta Pei Chou" or the "Dharani of Great Compassion". So powerful is this chant that, if uttered correctly, it is said to cause one's very consciousness to be permeated by Divine light.

About the Author:

Frances first connected with the Divine Feminine in the late 1980s. This connection was strengthened in 1993 when during a Wiccan rite known as "Drawing Down the Moon" the great Egyptian Goddess Isis made her presence felt.

Since that time Frances has continued to strengthen her personal relationship with the Divine Feminine - the Ancient Matriarch - the Goddess. Now Frances is drawn to share her knowledge and experience with others in order to assist them to re-connect with this ancient, yet powerful force.

Frances regularly writes for *Insight*, Australia's number one spiritual lifestyle magazine, with her articles also appearing in over 10 separate publications, including *Spellcraft*, *The Cauldron*, *Circle* and the Llewellyn's *Witch's Calendar*. She has further essays in a number of anthologies including *The Faerie Queens*, *Unto Herself: A Devotional Anthology for Independent Goddesses*, and *Memento Mori*. Her first book should be available from September 2012.

In 2007, Frances formed **The Goddess House**, a physical shrine where monthly devotional services and healing circles occur. These services are open to both men as well as women.

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