



When the Goddess was worshipped throughout the world, the division of cultures into "eastern" and "western" had not taken place. Only with the fragmentation of human society and religion caused by the decay of the matriarchies did such divisions occur. In the west it is well known how the image of the Goddess persisted through the semi-patriarchal and patriarchal periods right up to the present, first as a goddess with an inferior male consort (Isis, Cybele, Ishtar, etc.), then in the same form with the "god" slowly taking over, and finally in various supposedly non-Divine forms, chiefly the virgin Mary. It is also well known that however low Her "official" status may have sunk, She always returned to the central and predominant position in the hearts, minds and devotions of the vast majority of the people. This was universally true, whether in the Isis cult of the late Roman Empire, where Osiris was more or less forgotten for most of the time, or in the Mary cult in mediaeval Europe, where dozens of popular legends, as well as the vast predominance of Her devotion testified to the supremacy of Mary over Christ and the male trinity everywhere except in the Church's official dogma.

Above all, souls have always placed their hope in the Divine compassion of our Lady, as opposed to the vengefulness and masculine aggression of the all-too-human gods "made in man's image". This is powerfully represented in the prevalent mediaeval picture of "the two ladders to heaven"; the red ladder of Jesus from which many fell off into the fires of Hell, and the white ladder of Mary upon which every soul reached its glorious destination in safety. At this time it was also commonly believed that once a soul had entered Hell, even Jesus was powerless to save her, yet she might still be rescued by the infinite compassion of Mary.

All this is well known, but what is less well known in the west is that very much the same process has also taken place in the east. In China, for example,

the worship of the Daughter under the ancient name of Kuan Yin was so prevalent that She was finally incorporated into Buddhist practice as a celestial bodhisattva, very much as Mary was incorporated into Christian practice as a saint, and quickly assuming the same predominant position.

Her life-story as a bodhisattva comes far closer to the Truth of the Mythos than does that of Mary. It exists in various versions, but the essentials are always the same: incarnate on earth as a devoutly religious maiden, she defies her cruel father's wishes in order to enter a convent, whereupon he sets out to kill her. In many versions he has the convent surrounded by archers and then sets the building afire. Any nun seeking to escape is driven back into the inferno by a hail of arrows. Yet Kuan Yin (or Miao Shan, as she is sometimes called in this version) rises from death as a beautiful white bird, and the souls of the slaughtered nuns follow her into the sky, even as the souls in Hell follow the resurrected Daughter in the Mythos. In other versions, it is even clearer, and she actually descends into Hell to release the poor souls suffering there before entering into her ministry of compassion over all earth's children.

Perhaps one of the most striking points about the Kuan Yin cultus is that She rules a Pure Land or paradise, situated in the west, to which those who have called upon Her in life are taken to rest in happiness for a period before continuing upon their journey through cycles of incarnation. The parallel with the western Madrian teaching about Avala could hardly be more complete.

Just as the Daughter in the west is said to be "pure love" (Catechism 15), so Kuan Yin is the very embodiment of Divine compassion. She is constantly attentive to the prayers of humanity, so that one of Her most frequently-used titles is "regarder of the cries of the world", which again recalls the western epithet "Our Lady of Succour". Though perhaps Her most familiar and most expressive title is simply "Saviour". As with the Daughter in the west, Her sacred tree is the willow, and She uses a willow-branch to sprinkle water on the heads of Her votaries in a striking echo of the Rite of Initiation.

Another mark of the worship of the Daughter in all cultures is the faith of

the people in Her power to deliver them from danger and suffering. This faith in the mediaeval west was enshrined in the opening words of the Memorare: "Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that it is a thing unheard of, that anyone ever had recourse to Your protection, implored Your help... and was left forsaken." In the Far East, this same belief finds its expression in a lengthy passage from the Lotus Sutra, the principal text of Mahayana Buddhism, which has been called "the Gospel of half Asia":

"...The echoes of Her sacred deeds  
Resound through all the world...

Who hears Her Name, who looks to Her,  
Unceasingly remembers Her,  
Is freed from worldly sorrow.

Were you by vicious felons cast  
Into a roaring furnace,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
The flames will turn to water.

Or driven by the raging sea  
With foul fiends close about you,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
The waves shall turn their fury.

Else from Mount Sumeru's towering peak  
Some enemy should hurl you,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
Like the sun in the sky will She hold you.

Or running fast from evil men  
The Iron Mountain bars your path,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
No harm shall come to harm

Encircled by a murderous band  
With sharp knives poised to strike,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
Pity shall turn their hearts.

Or victim of a tyrant power,  
The axe upraised to slay you,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
It shall be dashed in fragments.

Locked in a dank and filthy cell  
And bound with iron fetters,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
And freedom shall be granted.

Or, having drunk a venomed cup,  
The darkness closes round you,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
And you shall wake refreshed.

Or else beset by devil-fiends,  
Dragons and demons, things Hell-spawned,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
They dare not touch Her servant.

With fearsome beasts on every side  
Cruel tusks and keen-edged claws,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
They flee in all directions.

Fierce dragon-serpents bar your way,  
With fiery breath and poison fume,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin  
And instantly they vanish.

Horrendous lightnings rend the sky,  
Prodigious torrents flood the earth,  
Turn but your thoughts upon Kuan Yin,  
The storm shall turn its wrath.

Bound upon Moira's iron wheel,  
All creatures suffer countless woes,  
Yet Kuan Yin's eyes see everything,  
Her help is always ready.

Infinite in Her Godly power  
And skilful in the care of souls  
She manifests in countless forms  
Throughout the wide-spread world.

Though endless evils plague the earth,  
Demons and beasts and godless men,  
Birth and old age, disease and death,  
Kuan Yin will end then, one by one.

True Kuan Yin! Pure Kuan Yin!  
Incalculably wise Kuan Yin!  
Compassionate to every creature,  
Eternally honoured and adored.

O, Heavenly Light, pure and unceasing!  
O, Sun of Wisdom, dispelling the dark!  
O, Conquerer of fire and storm!  
Your glory fills the world!

Your pity shields us from the lightning,  
Your compassion is like to a radiant cloud  
Dropping sweet rain of spiritual love,  
Quenching the flames of distress.

Name of Kuan Yin, most holy Name,  
Voice of the sea-tide, voice of God,  
Surpassing every worldly sound,  
Let it always be on your lips.

Call upon Her, never doubting,  
Saviour of all things, pure and serene,  
In pain or anguish, fear or death,  
She is our faithful and certain support.

Resplendent in every supreme perfection,  
All-seeing eyes of eternal compassion,  
Boundless ocean-store of blessings,  
In deep adoration we kneel at Her feet.

The belief in Kuan Yin's supernatural aid may seem far-fetched. After all, it is a simple fact of experience that the "tyrant power" which now dominates China, manifesting the ultimate extreme of masculist materialism, has murdered and imprisoned many thousands of Her devotees in its cruel drive against all spirituality. We must take into account that on one level the physical dangers depicted in the Sutra are allegories of the spiritual dangers which confront the soul at every stage in her ascent toward perfection. On another level, the Sutra expresses the truth that all worldly sufferings are the result of inward attachment to the world of illusion, and that if our contemplation is wholly directed toward the Divine (all our thoughts turned upon Kuan Yin) earthly sufferings can no longer touch us. So long as we remain separate from the Mother, we are bound to Moira's iron wheel, we are subject to birth, old age, disease and death and all the ills that flesh is heir to not once but endlessly, until we realise the Truth and act upon it. Only when we unite in contemplation with the Divine, "unceasingly remembering Her", do we transcend the endless evils that plague the earth.

Even so, like all inspired words, these sacred verses contain Truth on many levels; and alongside the deeper spiritual strata of meaning, the simplest exoteric significance of the words contains profounder truths than the profane

mind (whether openly anti-religious or trying to "rationalise" religion into a form acceptable to the prejudices of late-patriarchal materialism) would be happy to admit. Innumerable accounts exist - some well-attested by persons still living - of instances in which Kuan Yin has miraculously intervened to save some devotee from danger who has called upon Her. Many of the more modern instances involve hair's-breadth escapes from Communist persecutors. Sometimes help comes through "natural" means, extraordinary coincidences or strokes of luck. At other times it is purely "miraculous": the attacker who suddenly found himself unable to move a muscle when his victim called upon Kuan Yin's name; the lost traveller led to shelter by a vision of Kuan Yin; the devotee who was simply ignored by the Red Guards who were searching for her as though she had become invisible.

It is not only in China that Kuan Yin is honoured. She is known throughout most of South-East Asia. In Japan She is called Kwannon; in Tibet She goes by the name of Tara. In the introduction to Dr Beyer's monumental study The Cult of Tara,\* we read:

"Tara was the principal superhuman being in Tibet who might be called divine without further qualification. She is prayed to by millions; her help in adversity is divine...

"It does not help much to search for 'causes' to explain this trust in Tara and her eternity... She was real, she was divine. Tara was, had always been, and still is the almighty support of her devotees who address her. In fact she is mightier than Buddhas and Bodhisattvas... To understand something of her cult is to understand something of the mainstay of Tibetan culture and religion."

The instruction to "unceasingly remember Her", to "Let Her name be always on your lips", is taken with the utmost seriousness wherever She is worshipped, and Her most ardent devotees spend many hours in recitation; sometimes simply repeating Her name thousands of times, sometimes reciting the Lotus Sutra verses, or the Dharani of Great Compassion, another important text in the worship of Kuan Yin, often using a Rosary. Sometimes the Name is recited un-

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ceasingly over a period of many days, until the revolving of the sound becomes a continual inward reality even in sleep or when engaged in other activities. This practice may eventually lead to a mystical experience or a vision, and certainly to a degree of detachment from worldly suffering corresponding to a higher level of consciousness.

The effect is due not only to the psychological value of the exercise (in the fullest sense: psyche = soul, therefore true psychology is the science of the soul's laws), but also to the particular spiritual quality of the sound of the Name itself (it is possible that the same effect would not be produced by a western pronunciation of the Chinese syllables, though there are western equivalents of the Name, most notably, of course, Inanna, which should be pronounced short a's and a particular caressing quality about the n's). The Name is often incorporated within a short mantram.

Certain rather more complicated mantric visualisation practices have also been used to great effect and might well be adopted by Madrians who feel drawn to this form of development. For this reason, an adaptation of one such method is included here. The main mantram employed is the famous OM MANI PADME HUM. This mantram has a long history, going back long before Buddhism and the practices with which it has been associated in more recent times. In being addressed to Kuan Yin, it is returning to its origins, for it is a primordial sound-form corresponding to the devout invocation of the Daughter. It is suitable for western usage, since it is from the Sanscrit which is close to the root-language of all western dialects. The fact that it is also effective in the Far East is a possible indication that it goes back beyond this to the universal root-language which preceded the division of east and west, and therefore remains unchanged in sound since the central matriarchal period. A rough translation would be "Hail (or behold) the jewel in the lotus". This refers directly to the Daughter, the lotus being the eastern equivalent of the rose, which symbolises the Mother, and the "jewel" within it the Daughter to Whom She gives birth. This symbolism occurs on the ring sometimes worn by priestesses with a pure crystal couched in the petals of a golden rose. Gold is the metal of the sun, symbolising the Mother, and crystal the jewel of the moon, symbolising the Daughter.

The following practice has been used in both China and Tibet:

### Preparation

Take a ritual bath, preferably scented with eucalyptus or some other lunar essence. Let the purification of your body symbolise the purification of your mind, and if any sin lie on you, do penance for it beforehand. Dress yourself with quietness and reverence, preferably in a white robe.

Go to your shrine, whereon shall be an image or a statue of the Daughter and a censer for incense-sticks.

Take in your left hand an incense stick, and with the finger and thumb of your right hand, form a circle. At the place where the tips meet, envision a white glow, representing the syllable OM (this is pronounced midway between OM and AUM). After a moment, this is transformed into a budding lotus wherewith you trace the letters OM AH HUM above the glowing incense. Thus will the smoke spread out to form a great cloud of purity. Reverencing, recite these words:

"May this precious cloud form an offering to the Mother and to the Daughter and to Absolute Deity, an offering to the Geniae of the seven spheres, and to all the Geniae of Heaven, an offering to the saints and the heras that have walked this earth in the love of the Goddess through countless centuries, and having attained to perfect liberation are one with me in Her Ekklesia."

Make the Pentacle in the four directions, and invoke the protection of the guardian daughters of the fourfold earth (as in the Rite of Sacrifice, but do not use the Name of Power). Place the stick reverently in the censer.

### First Stage

Settle before the shrine, either in the Artemid posture or the Padmasana (Lotus Posture) or in any position that is comfortable and not disturbing. Breathe slowly and deeply. At the crown of your head, envision a white glow representing OM, at your throat a red AH, at your heart a blue HUM. These glowing centres throw out rays of their respective colours in all directions. By them all the evil of wrong choices and wrong deeds made since the dawn of time by your self and by all selves are expelled in the form of a black liquid which drains away into the earth until no drop remains. Thus, purged of evil, you are one with the Good, and your body speech and mind are as the body speech and mind of Kuan Yin, unutterably beautiful and overflowing with compassion. Place your hands in

the lotus position (thumbs and fingertips together with hands arching away from the centre, to form the "bowl" of the lotus). Recite the mantram OM MANI PADME HUM, centring your consciousness of each syllable in turn upon a specific part of your upper body, revolving the mind from one to the next, thus: OM, heart; MA, left shoulder; NI, throat; PAD, right shoulder; ME, navel; HUM, crown of head (first rotation).



First rotation



Second rotation



Hands in lotus position

After a time, rearrange the positions of the syllables into the following pattern: OM, crown of head; MA, throat; NI, right shoulder; PAD, navel; ME, left shoulder; HUM, heart. The more these rotations are repeated, the more wonderful will be the results.

For a time it will be sufficient to practise only the first stage, attaining proficiency in this practice before passing on to the complete exercise.

#### Second stage

Within your breast envision the moon's disk, bright and pure in brilliant white. Standing in space before you is a pink moon-disk manifesting the syllable TAM (the invocation-word of Tara). Suddenly this disk becomes a vision of Kuan Yin with a bright nimbus about Her head and a Rosary around Her neck made from pearls strung together. Upon the crown of her head appears a white glow within the nimbus, manifesting the syllable OM; at Her throat a red AH, close to Her heart a blue HUM. The rays of these blend with those proceeding from the OM AH HUM upon your own body. She is seated in a posture of meditation. An opening develops in the crown of your head, and the rays are drawn into it. The image of Kuan Yin

diminishes in size until it follows the rays into your head and you are one with Her.

Now join the tip of your right thumb with the tip of the ring-finger. Trace the words OM AH HUM on your left hand. Envision a pearl before you, and with your left hand trace those syllable upon it, at the same time speaking them with intense concentration. Now visualise yourself holding the pearl before your breast with the thumbs and forefingers of both hands, and begin to recite the mantram OM MANI PADME HUM for a period.

### Third Stage

Visualise a white glow manifesting OM upon the crown of your head, streaming out rays of splendid light, which illuminate all states of existence, hells and higher worlds, spirit-worlds, and every place in which souls still strive for liberation. By this light their sins and wrong-choices are purified away. Near your heart shines a blue HUM, filling all the earth with its rays, and comforting all the creatures that move upon it. Within the circle of the light shed by its rays are seen as many Pure Lands or heaven-worlds as one wishes to envision. Then the white and blue rays enter the crown of your head and penetrate to the lowest parts of your body. Adopt again the position of holding the pearl and recite again the OM MANI PADME HUM for a period.

When this has been achieved, say the prayer of eternity and reverence the nymphs of the four quarters. (Note: the reverence consists of placing the hands together, fingertips pointing upward, before the breast and bowing the head).