



**KUAN YIN**  
**Accessing the Power  
of the Divine  
Feminine**

**Daniela Schenker**

**Hardcover**

**6 x 7 ½"**

**208 Pages**

**33 watercolor images**

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## KUAN YIN

### About the Author: Daniela Schenker

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Daniela Schenker works as an astrologer, Feng Shui consultant, and holistic lifestyle advisor. She has studied Asian traditions for more than twenty years, traveling extensively throughout the world to trace both the history and modern worship of Kuan Yin.

#### **Daniela's story** (from the introduction)

I first met Kuan Yin, the goddess of healing and compassion, more than twelve years ago. I had been studying with Tai Chi and calligraphy master Julie Lim and she gave me a golden pendant with Kuan Yin standing on a large lotus flower. On the back was an engraving from the Heart Sutra, a beloved Buddhist text that is associated with Kuan Yin. I was touched by the gift, and immediately intrigued. Kuan Yin's face had a mystical quality, reminding me a little of Mona Lisa's subtle smile. I felt an inner stirring. *Who is the goddess behind this lovely image, I wondered, and what might I learn from her?*

While I did not know it at the time, this small gift was just the first step on a wonderful journey that would take me to exotic sites around the world and deep places within myself. I became immersed in Kuan Yin's history and iconography. I traced her origins and evolution, and visited temples where I could connect with her more deeply. I read ancient texts that described and honored her. In time I realized that Kuan Yin had become my wise, loving, and compassionate companion on the spiritual path. By tuning in to her many manifestations I have grown spiritually and have had many joyful experiences.

Kuan Yin is a bodhisattva, a being who refrains from entering Nirvana in order to come to the aid of others. There are many bodhisattvas, but the way she became one is unique to her. Kuan Yin had led such a pure, compassionate, and virtuous life that the gate to the highest enlightenment—Nirvana—at last lay open before her. But as she stood at the verge of this final threshold in contemplation, she heard shouts and cries of suffering emanating from all sentient beings, spreading about her like a great wave. So profoundly was she moved by the pain of the world's beings that her heart began to shake, and she knew that she could not yet leave the world behind. And so it was that Kuan Yin took the vow of a bodhisattva: "I will not reach final liberation until all other beings have been liberated."

My heart was deeply touched when I read this tale, and the reason that I had experienced such an immediate, intuitive attraction to Kuan Yin became abundantly clear. One day, several years before I learned of Kuan Yin's existence, I had a very intense mystical experience. I was doing the dishes—a simple thing—when my awareness suddenly shifted, unfolding and expanding. In an instant, I was hearing the sounds of people everywhere. I could hear babies crying, people sighing, screaming, and laughing—I was enveloped in teeming waves of human sound, from the first breath at birth to the last sigh at passing.

While it was a very strange experience, I wasn't afraid; instead, I felt moved by the seemingly infinite expressions of life I was experiencing, and sensed a special opening that I still feel today. Then, just as suddenly as the sounds had come to me, they began to weave together, blending and fusing into a single wave—a profound vibration that I knew to be the sound of the human world.



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Imagine having had this experience long before I'd ever heard of Kuan Yin, and then learning the story of how she became a bodhisattva! My own personal "cosmic ear" experience led me to feel a deep bond with her, and propelled me to seek her everywhere.

So my connection with Kuan Yin stems from an intense internal experience. But many of the stories people tell me about their own connections to her are quite different. People call on Kuan Yin for many reasons—to keep them safe while traveling, or to bless them with children. I have heard tales of people who were cured of serious diseases after seeking her blessings. This compassionate goddess has many manifestations, as you will soon discover. Because of this, there are myriad ways in which we can invite her into our lives, and many dimensions to our experiences of her. Though her roots are in ancient India and China, today she can be found everywhere. There are figurines of her on altars in Israel, for example, and in Mexico and Brazil she sits side by side with "Maria," mother of Jesus.

As I spent more time with Kuan Yin and learned more about her, I developed an inner vision: I saw myself making her abundant variety of forms accessible to Western readers, offering images and contemplations to serve as gateways to a direct experience of her limitless compassion.

I told my longtime friend, Antonia Baginski, about my vision. She grasped the concept immediately, joined me in long discussions, and spent her own time tuning in to Kuan Yin. With sensitivity and grace, she applied her study of Asian art and her interpretation of its complexities to the project, creating thirty-three paintings of Kuan Yin in beautiful, radiant colors.

We both wanted to develop the feminist energy of Kuan Yin and convey it to Western readers. Although the ancient texts often refer to male representations of the deity, we portrayed her as she is most commonly known today, showing her exclusively in female form. She is not only the embodiment of the Buddhist ideal of compassion, the mighty healer who carries the nectar of healing and compassion in her vase; she is also an example of the powerful energy of the women who have preserved feminine ideals over the centuries despite the constraints of the male-dominated societies in which they have lived. The richly colored paintings and specially developed contemplations in this book will help you learn more about the wide range of images and their origins. And whether you are a woman or a man, they will help you to recognize and awaken your own varied energies and potential.

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