



## **Bodhisattva of Compassion: The Mystical Tradition of Kuan Yin (Shambhala Dragon Editions)**

*John Blofeld*

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She is the embodiment of selfless love, the supreme symbol of radical compassion, and, for more than a millennium throughout Asia, she has been revered as “The One Who Harkens to the Cries of the World.” Kuan Yin is both a Buddhist symbol and a beloved deity of Chinese folk religion. John Blofeld’s classic study traces the history of this most famous of all the bodhisattvas from her origins in India (as the male figure Avalokiteshvara) to Tibet, China, and beyond, along the way highlighting her close connection to other figures such as Tara and Amitabha. The account is full of charming stories of Blofeld’s encounters with Kuan Yin’s devotees during his journeys in China. The book also contains meditation and visualization techniques associated with the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and translations of poems and yogic texts devoted to her.

## **Bodhisattva of Compassion: The Mystical Tradition of Kuan Yin (Shambhala Dragon Editions) Details**

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Author : John Blofeld

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## **From Reader Review Bodhisattva of Compassion: The Mystical Tradition of Kuan Yin (Shambhala Dragon Editions) for online ebook**

### **Robin P. says**

Very white-gaze-y and appropriative. I should have known. White dude takes a tourism trip and finds religion. Spreads misconceptions of this religion that doesn't belong to him to other white people for imperialist profit. Like, who even fucking cares?

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### **A.B. McFarland says**

Easy to read if you have some experience and understanding of esoteric Buddhism and Kuan Yin/Chenrezi/Avalokiteshvara/Tara. Lots of stories, dreams, visions. It all hung together pretty well for me.

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### **Demi Black Cre8tive Dreamz says**

Thank you Thomas for bringing her to life....

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### **Frank says**

2.75 stars. I was really looking forward to this book being highly interested in the subject but I found the majority of the writing to be quite dry. There were portions that I thoroughly enjoyed but just not enough of them.

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### **Mylinh Shattan says**

Read about this book in my letter here:

<http://treehouseletter.com/?s=compassion>

I share my mother's folk tale of Kuan Yin and insights from this book

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### **Lisa says**

like new

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### **Vanessa says**

okay i lie i didn't read, i skimmed. friend suggested it to help tara practice but it was way too scholarly and abstruse for me and i didn't connect with it so gave up. i am such a failure!

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### **Ming Yen PHAN says**

An interesting personal journey and reflection on the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin (Avalokitesvara). Valuable for the various anecdotes of the author.

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### **David Gould says**

I got this book many years ago, on the shelves of the State Library of Tasmania and could not put it down, not the least because I had stumbled across a statue of Kuan Yin, in blanc de chine porcelain and purchased it. This book captures a lost China of Buddhist monasteries, wayside shrines and temples, and a deep devotion to the Bodhisattva who hears the cries of the world - and responds. The book is full of charming vignettes of Chinese and Tibetan stories - some contemporary to the writer of Kuan Yin. Well worth reading.

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### **Dreameremporium says**

very good

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### **Holly says**

Originally posted at [ragdollreads.co.uk](http://ragdollreads.co.uk)

TL;DR – A series of collected stories and information about Kwan Yin, Bodhisattva and Goddess.

RAGDOLL RATING: 3.5/5 BUTTONS

Why I read it...

I came across Kwan Yin Bodhisattva some time ago – one of my Buddhist friends introduced her to me. It was interesting to see a prominent Buddhist figure who had gone from a male form (Avalokitesvara) to female, some trans Buddhist folk I know see that as a really big thing for what I assume should be obvious reasons. Since then I've been meaning to research her a bit and this book was on a list of recommendations.

The Book...

This book is more like a collection of anecdotes than anything else. I could be wrong, but it doesn't appear to have been actually researched. That's not to say it isn't accurate, just don't go into it expecting references or

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academic stuff.

It follows Blofeld's quest to discover Kwan Yin. He begins by telling us how his quest began – specifically that a bronze statue addressed him in a temple once. What follows is an examination of Kwan Yin from as many perspectives as possible. We learn about the manifestations of Kwan Yin – from Buddhist figure to Chinese mythical princess. Then we look at her origins in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism and her possible origins and a combination of Tara and Avalokiteshvara. Then we have some chapters on her history as the subject of Chinese folk tales, sacred rites and practices, meditations and so on.

Each chapter is presented as either first hand information or recollection of stories the author was told by people he has discussed the topic with.

What I liked...

I liked the first half of this book or so. The discussion of the theoretical histories, origins and interpretations was really interesting, and the fact that Blofeld provided (what he claims to be) accurate transcripts of discussions he's had was a peculiar but welcome change from the usual academic non-fiction I read.

I particularly enjoyed the section where Blofeld discussed – at length – the connection between Kwan Yin and Tara. Blofeld treats us to stories of peoples interactions with these figures, without trying to dismiss them automatically as nonsense – and speaks of his own experiences that could be considered 'supernatural'.

What I disliked...

The last chapter. I really don't know what happened. I was enjoying the book until the last chapter, at which point it felt like the writing changed and all of a sudden I was reading a different book. For the life of me I couldn't tell you how this book ended.

Final thoughts...

This book was an interesting read, and the format of collected anecdotes was novel and different – although what the means in terms of accuracy I'm not sure. It was worth reading though, even if I didn't enjoy the final chapter.

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Please note: I am in no way affiliated with the author or publishers. I bought this book with my own money for my own reasons. The opinions contained within are my own and have not been influenced by any external entity!

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## **Christopher says**

This book has some incredible stories, both about Kuan Yin and about Tara. Of all of the books I've read about Kuan Yin, this is by far my favorite. Originally published in the 1950s, the discussions and people cited in this book probably date to the early 20th century. If you are looking for a very good analysis of how Kuan Yin fits in both to Buddhism and to Chinese folk religion, this book offers some of the best explanations I've seen.

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### **Peggy says**

I came across this book by accident in the library, or maybe it wasn't an accident at all. Maybe it was the bodhisattva reaching out to me, in some way. This book certainly made me more curious about her. I was raised by a buddhist father, but never heard of her. When I asked my father, he had not heard of Kuan Yin, either. Maybe I should ask if he knows of her (him) by another name. Maybe Tara? Anyway, it was a good read. I finished it in a day and a half.

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### **Janelle says**

This book offered a beautiful introduction to Kuan Yin, both as a celestial figure and a bodhisattva. The stories relayed were both powerful and charming, as befit Blofeld's description of Kuan Yin. I enjoyed it a lot and feel driven to seek out more information on her, but I felt the book was weakened by the author admitting often to "filling in the blanks of his memory" for many of the stories transmitted to him (I welcomed the honesty, but wondered why he didn't take greater pains to make accurate notes or use a recording device, since his hunt was specifically for stories of Kuan Yin), and also because he seemed to write from a defensive position, sharing negative assumptions about his audience rather than simply sharing the joy and knowledge he possessed.

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### **Nicholas says**

Most inspiring!

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