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The Sandtray Network publishes this Journal on the Web at www.sandtray.org as an offering to the world wide community of elders, healers, educators and transformational leaders.

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Honoring Lilly

By Mary Herza

Photography: G.S. De Domenico

Lilly, the most gentle of souls, died in my arms. I found her upon my return, having been away from home for three nights. She had been waiting patiently behind a closed door I had inadvertently shut. She had waited there, growing more desperate for water and food, unnoticed by the cat sitter who attended to the needs of the three outdoor cats. I damned myself, feeling I "should have known." Something had told me not to leave. I felt such horror at not heeding my inner guidance and shed hot tears for the incredible suffering my humanness had caused dear Lilly. I felt gratitude for the generosity and compassion of her spirit, which awaited my homecoming before passing.



This sandtray, made in her honor, was yet another gift. It speaks of her passage and the unseen beings who witnessed and held her suffering and demise. Lilly is the great golden cat in the center. She and the center are held by the unseen ones. As she is being freed of her physical body, she is witnessing her own journey on the boat of death.



The dragon guards the threshold. The great Beings each have their own quality and way of witnessing the soul's journey. The Egyptians reference Lilly's spiritual heritage. Death itself points the direction of the journey. The Africans are true witnesses to the Wheel of Life. There is a deep knowing here of the cycle of birth and death. The Shaman, too, bears this knowledge.



The Great Mother holds Lilly in love. The candle lights the way.



Ku, who holds fertility and agriculture, is most knowledgeable in the ways of the body. She awaits Lilly's physical body, assisting in her transformation of form to spirit and the return of the body to the Earth.



The seated Hawaiian woman represents me. She is present for the entire process. And, with the others, she awaits the return of Lilly's body to Earth.

One Thousand Armed Kwan-Yin: Embracing the Piece-fulness of the Multivalent Psyche

by Maila T. Davenport L.P.C., M.A.

What happens when you stare long enough and soulfully enough at an object before your eyes? You become assimilated to it in your consciousness... [it] slowly enters you and becomes part of your attitude, your mind set, the very form or logical constitution of consciousness itself. The object comes home to you.

Giegerich (1999), pp.11-12

When an object appears in a sandtray I begin to imagine the collage of meanings that surround it, including its 'mythic aura' -- much like little PigPen's dust cloud in the Peanuts cartoon series. The client also brings his and her own associations. The image itself brings its own collective meanings amplified in the many multicultural tellings of its story through geography and time. Thus, when tracking the mythic underpinnings of clinical material, the therapist's goal is no longer to find the single 'truest' version of a myth. For indeed, the Truth of the Soul is prismatic. It is the weave, not the golden thread, that leads client and therapist to the iridescence of Soul.

Any story as a myth of psychology expresses a unique archetypal moment by soul in search of Wholeness.¹ Here, wholeness does not describe an unambiguous identity as prescribed in traditional Jungian thought. Because we live in a different cultural climate, myths or symbols are no longer asked to form cohesion or answer questions as in previous centuries. On the contrary, symbols must now act as a "catapult" to drive us into the unknown

¹ "Myth of psychology" refers to myths about the activity-of-soul and not the psychologizing of mythic material for therapeutic illustration. James Hillman reminds us that 'psychology' in its original Greek means 'soul activity,' as opposed to 'ego activity,' to which so many contemporary theories adhere.

and "propel the soul." (Campbell, 1969, p.168 & p. 171). In order to experience Wholeness, we must accept that it is a composite of many pieces. From this standpoint, the mandala of the monolithic Self dissolves and one is forced to reconcile variegated parts of Self with no illusion of a unified whole, to see the beauty and the terror of piece-fulness.

Recently, much has been written about Kwan Yin. This comes as no surprise to some, for the world is definitely in need of her compassion for human and planetary suffering. Her calm presence is a welcome balm to pain. The mantra *Um Mane Pedme Hung* ("the jewel is always in the lotus") is a call for her presence. When Kwan Yin appears in the sandtray, she brings mythic amplifications in a whispering trail behind her. Looking more closely into the Princess Miao Shan version of her story, we learn she is not only the serene force of the Divine Feminine as represented by her popularized image, but she is a powerful source of self-generation.

One of the early myths of Kwan Yin is a story about self-mutilation and cannibalism.² It is the story of a young Princess, Miao Shan. In the myth we learn that from an early age, the Princess Miao Shan is filled with compassion. Her primary desire is to dedicate her life to serving and healing the ills of the world. Her father, the king, tries to force her to marry and when she refuses, he gives her the dirtiest jobs in the palace. With her mother's intervention, she renounces her crown and enters the nunnery. Her father continues his efforts, sending his soldiers to destroy the nunnery and calling for the Princess' execution. When the executioner's sword breaks, he ultimately strangles her with a silken cord. A huge tiger takes her dead body to a safe place, gives her a pill of immortality and she comes back to life, then going on retreat on a mountain. The king continues to do his evil deeds and is stricken with many sicknesses. When he is near death, he is told to take the arm and the eye of one who is without anger, combine them into a medicine, and he will be cured. After becoming a Bodhisattva, Kwan Yin receives the king's messenger, who tells her of the king's plight and she promptly gouges out both eyes and amputates

² I focus here on the myth of Princess Miao Shan as retold by Palmer and Ramsay (1995, pp. 63-78).

both arms. The whole Earth shakes. A monk cooks Kwan Yin's eyes and arms and makes the only curative potion possible for the king. The king drinks the potion. In the last movement of the myth, Miao Chuang makes a pilgrimage to Hsiang Shan to thank his unknown donor. He and the queen view the mutilated woman and recognize her as their dead daughter, Miao Shan. The king realizes her capacity to give to him in spite of all the harm he caused her and recognizes the misery he has given the world. After he begs her forgiveness, Miao Shan transforms herself into the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Kwan Yin. Thereafter the king returns to his people and becomes a compassionate leader.³

June Campbell (1996) offers a feminist interpretation of the Princess Miao Shan story. For Campbell, the father is the referent for the entire myth. The myth demonstrates women's struggle against the patriarchy, because the father king initiates the action. Kwan Yin's self-sacrifice is seen as a gesture for the sake of a society (i.e. patriarchy) where women's needs are secondary to the majority masculine culture. Kwan Yin's compassion is expressed as she sacrifices her sexuality and power to the male oppressor. Campbell purports that this myth brings a new harmony to a society which no longer acknowledges the Divine Feminine.

There is more to Kwan Yin than can be seen through this twentieth century sociopolitical lens. Such a literal interpretation of her soul-filled story is a true compromise of her power. If Kwan Yin is more than a victim of a patriarchy, who can she be?

In the exploration that follows, I intentionally do not summarize the myth and then interpret, as is the expected journal submission for a traditional depth psychological analysis. Instead, I present the myth piece-by-piece, as a client shares his/her story in a sandtray. The benefit of this model is that each segment reveals its own questions. Some may

³ Before hearing this particular myth, I imagined Kwan Yin as a docile demi-goddess, even the "Buddhist Virgin Mary." But there is no such blood in Mary's story. The Virgin would never dismember herself--Kwan Yin is definitely no Virgin Mary.

recognize this as similar to the joint experiencing phase in the Sandtray-Worldplay structure. Here the myth is its own expert, teaching the path of inquiry to divulge what lies within its folds.⁴ I find this keeps the mythic material alive and prevents the malaise born of a solitary interpretation.

To behold Kwan Yin is to be assimilated by her; it is to become what one sees. It is a coming home to the mosaic self in all its variegated wonder. This story of Kwan Yin prompted me to ask new questions:

Who is she keeping company with?

What is invisible here?

What dialectic has been silenced or is finally being spoken?

What unity or what dissonance does this reveal?

There is an old adage, "You can tell a lot about someone by the company they keep." This folk wisdom holds true in the myth and sandtray world as well. James Hillman (1985) writes about the importance of tandems in psyche's material, challenging the union of opposites prevalent in Jung's work. As witnesses we seek the syncretic movements or pairings that appear, not to compensate for the other and subsequently construct a singular whole, but rather to compliment the other and allow the refractions, teaching us more about them both.

In the myth, we must look at Kwan Yin in context, in relationship, as part of a constellation with her hungry father, King Miao. Miao Chuang is not just any kind of ruler. He is a taker, a pirate. He forcefully grasps. He uses manipulation and violence. He is oblivious to

⁴ To interpret a myth psychologically in a post-Jungian model, we are not to look for cause-and-effect relationships, as with the phrase "if/then." Psyche does not move in such a linear fashion, but rather in circular and uroboric movement. As clinicians we can observe during the building phase and play with the phrase "when/then," as in, "When Kwan Yin appears then xyz" (i.e. the builder's next movement; where Kwan Yin looks to in the tray; or however energies may become combined in the sandtray).

what he gives--suffering--to those unfortunates in his path.

The story prompted me to inquire:

Who is hungry?

What is s/he hungry for?

What is being swallowed up?

What is being sacrificed (made sacred)?

This motion of 'taking' is an action brought on by an insatiable hunger for wholeness. Here a Jungian might want to interpret this longing for wholeness as the desire for the anima or animus. A feminist might want to equate it with the misguided hunger for power or domination. I believe both theories miss the point. They each remain steadfast to the ego's construct of wholeness instead of penetrating to the soul's notion of wholeness (as sandtray therapists we could say they remain outside of the builder's world). Here is a man-- a being, psychological energy-- who through conquering, bullying, and ravaging, grasps things closer to himself, only to be left un nourished. Why? Much like the addictive process, he compulsively attempts to devour that which cannot alleviate his suffering. He cannot digest (to be read, 'take in deeply and be sourced') that which was taken by his grasping. Ultimately, nothing can be made sacred.

Miao Shan is a giver. She gives her father both eyes and arms.

She is not, however, the 'opposite' of her hungry father. For indeed, as she gives solace and compassion there is an ingesting, a taking in, of the other one's pain that simultaneously occurs. The act of Giving need not be a passive action or interpreted as giving up, as Campbell would have us believe. Miao Shan initiates action when she gives her eyes and arms to her father. She takes his blindness and insensitivity for her own. She bestows the gifts of compassion and mindfulness, clear seeing and right action. And it is through this very eagerness that more compassion is manifest--her thousand golden arms shine. Neither mindfulness nor compassion can be lost; there is no limited supply. One can lose touch (the hand's sense) with them, but one can always recover them.

Kwan Yin's action of self-mutilation is not her literal victimization, but rather an act of ego abandonment or soulful regeneration: truth or insight permeates and reconstitutes one's consciousness. Kwan Yin as a vessel of the Feminine Principle prevents her own literalization by self-dissolution and gives existence to the sphere of non-existence. Kwan Yin, as pure receptivity, is capable of organic, visceral reconstitution. She is boundless.

I am prompted to explore:

What is being internalized?

What gift is being bestowed?

What deep change is occurring?

A monk cooks Kwan Yin's eyes and arms and makes the only curative potion possible for the king.

Recall that myth's logic cannot be simplified to cause-and-effect reasoning. Its riches spawn within ambiguity. Accordingly, the king's infection is not a punishment for his evil deeds; it is not some deity's hex designed to make his life a moral teaching. It is no accident that the king's dis-ease is an infection, the embodiment of the notion of the Usurper. He is "self-usurping," so to speak, for that is what he is, a taker. Miao Chuang, the king-father, through his infection, is 'taking' himself nearly to a point of death.

The king drinks the potion of her body.

Kwan Yin is no martyr. Indeed, there is no risk of Kwan Yin's no longer existing. As discussed above, ingestion helps shape her purpose: in this act of giving she takes, and by this act manifests even more compassion. She is an unfathomed vessel. There is a further twist: when the king drinks the gruesome potion and is healed, his infection is not eradicated (if it had been, this would condone the definition of health as the absence of illness). By Kuan Yin's action, the King's infection is not eliminated, but its inverted quality of giving is illuminated. Through the soul's work infection is transformed into impregnation.

Then I inquired of this Kwan Yin myth:

*What pieces are learning to live in tandem?
What is no longer split off?
What is coming home?*

In the last movement of the myth, Miao Chuang makes a pilgrimage to Hsiang Shan. He and his queen recognize the mutilated woman as their dead daughter Miao Shan. The king realizes her capacity to give and recognizes the misery he has given the world. As the clouds of the great storm ascend, Miao Shan reveals herself as the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Kwan Yin. By her bidding, the king returns to his kingdom to rule with justice and teach compassion and love.

Again caution must be exercised so that we do not slip back into a cause-and-effect analysis. Kwan Yin's conversion is not an outcome of Miao Chuang's insight. He does not instigate this action of the myth. More soulfully, the capacity for the father to behold the sacred Kwan Yin is a testimonial to his transformation. What changes is his ability to see her in her Truth, the true form she has always been. The final result of his gestation is his ability to leave egoic literalism and enter the mindful and compassionate world. Her Thousand Arms and Thousand Eyes reflect consciousness, reveling in the beauty of piece-fulness.

A less common portrayal of Kwan Yin is as the golden Thousand-Armed-One, open palmed with an eye in each center. This image reveals her, and our, true multivalence. Such a figure is more difficult to find, but I encourage all of us to find her so we, and our clients, may more deeply explore the experience of piece-fulness. It is hoped this phenomenological prototype for exploration prompts therapists to engage with the ancient stories that surface in the stories of clients, so that once again the myths teach us about what it means to be human.

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Shapes of Kuan Yin

by Gisela Schubach De Domenico, PhD



Kuan Yin in our Cosmos



Kuan Yin on the Waters of Earth



Kuan Yin with Fire Dragon



Kuan Yin bestowing Blessings



Kuan Yin watering Turtle



The Thousand Armed Kuan Yin

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Feminine Images of God

By Karen Wallace

God, the transcendent Spirit who possesses no physical body, is portrayed in the Bible through gender-laden images. As a pastoral counselor, I have had the opportunity to facilitate several sandtray workshops with the theme, "Exploring the feminine images of God in scripture." In the predominately rural county where I live, the grassroots population and the church are resistant to including an image of God the Mother in their view of God the Father. These sandtray workshops have been powerful tools in assisting the participants to become more aware of the female aspects of God.

To emotionally connect with the feminine images of God in scripture, I created from Das modeling clay a number of images representing females in the Bible. These I divided into two categories—images of God depicting women's biological activity and those depicting women's cultural activity.

The biological activity associated with the feminine form of God was motherhood, God as Mother.



I made from clay a woman in labor (Isa. 42:14);

(Thus says the Lord) I have for a long time held my peace; I have been still, and restrained Myself: now I will cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant together.



A mother who does not forget the child she nurses (Isa. 49:14-15; Num 11:12)

But Zion (Jerusalem, her people seen in captivity) said, The Lord has forsaken me.

(And the Lord answered) Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet I will not forget you.

Have I conceived all this people? Have I brought them forth that You should say to me, Carry them in your bosom, as a nursing father carries the sucking child, to the land which you swore to their fathers (to give them)?



A mother who comforts her children (Isa.66: 12-13),

For thus says the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream: then you shall be nursed, you shall be carried on her hip, and be trotted on her (God's maternal) knees.

As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you: you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

A mother who calls, teaches, holds, heals and feeds her young (Hosea 11:1-4).



When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt.

(The more the prophets) called to them, the more they went from them; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and burning incense to the graven images.

Yet I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms or taking them up in My arms, but they did not know that I healed them.

I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love, and I was to them as one who lifts up and eases the yoke over their cheeks, and I bent down to them and gently laid food before them.

Other maternal references in scripture include: Isa. 46:3-4, Dt. 32:18, Ps. 131:2, Job 38:8, Prov. 8:22-25, 1 Pet. 2; 2-3, Acts 17:28.

Several cultural activities depict feminine images of God. Those I selected were:



God as midwife, attending a birth (Ps.22:9-10a, 71:6; Isa.66:9);

Yet You are He Who took me out of the womb; You made me hope and trust when I was on my mother's breasts.

I was cast upon You from my very birth; from my mothers' womb You are my God.

Upon You I have leaned and relied from birth; You are He Who took me from my mothers womb and have been my benefactor from that day. My praise is continually of You.

Shall I bring to the birth and not bring forth? Says the Lord; shall I Who cause to bring forth shut the womb? Says your God.



God as a woman working leavening into bread (Lk.13: 18-21);

This led Him to say, What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and planted into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the wild birds found shelter and roosted and nested in its branches.

And again He said, To what shall I liken the kingdom of God?

*It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of wheat flour **or** meal, until it was all leavened (fermented).*



God as a woman seeking a lost coin (Lk.15:8-10).

Or what woman, having ten (silver) drachmas (each equal to one day's wages) if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and look carefully and diligently until she finds it?

There is also reference to God as seamstress, making clothes for the Israelites to wear (Neh. 9:21);

Forty Years sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

In addition to God-like images of women associated with both biological and cultural activities, I found scriptural references to the female form of God in images of nature. In numerous places, Yahweh is portrayed through the analogy of a female bird protecting her young. (Ps. 17:8, 36:7. 57:1, 91:1, 4; Isa. 31:5; Dt. 32:11-12)

Keep and guard me as the pupil of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.

Your mercy and loving kindness, O Lord, extend to the skies, and our faithfulness to the clouds.

Be merciful and gracious to me, O God, be merciful and gracious to me; for my soul takes refuge and finds shelter and confidence in You; yes, in the shadow of your wings will I take refuge and be confident until the calamities and destructive storms are passed.

As an eagle that stirs up her nest, that flutters over her young, He spread abroad His wings; He took them, He bore them on His pinions.

So the Lord alone led him; there was no foreign god with Him.

I modeled in clay the image of a mother eagle.



“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead Jacob....” Dt.32: 11-12(KJV).

The female eagle, both larger and stronger than the male, does the bulk of the incubation of the eggs as well as the hunting. She is the one who bears the eaglets on her wings when it is time for them to leave the nest. In a sudden movement, she swoops down to force them to fly alone, but always stays near enough to swoop back under them when they become too weary to fly on their own. This is a

powerful image of God nurturing and supporting us when we are weak, yet always encouraging us to grow and mature.

“I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.”(Cf. Ex.19:4)

Further references can be found in Job 39:27-30.
*Does the eagle mount up at your command and make his nest on a high (inaccessible) place?
On the cliffs (s)he dwells and remains securely, upon the point of the rock and the stronghold.
From there he spies out the prey, and his eyes see it far off.
His young ones suck up the blood, and where the slain are, there is he.*



Other animal images used to portray God as Mother are the mother bear (Hosea 13:8), and the hen (Mt.23: 37, par.Lk.25:34; cf.Ruth 2:12).

I will meet them as a bear that is robbed of her cubs, and I will rend the covering of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lioness, as a wild beast would tear them.

Finally, the Holy Spirit is often associated with women’s functions: the birthing process (Jn.3:5; cf.Jn.1:13, 1 Jn.4:7b, 5:1, 4, 18), consoling, comforting, emotional warmth, and inspiration.

Jesus answered, I assure you, most solemnly, I tell you, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

As I seek to follow biblical inclusivity, let me affirm the consistent witness of the church, namely, that God is neither feminine nor masculine (gender), neither male nor female (sex). God, who is transcendent Spirit, possesses no physical body, yet accommodates to humans by using limiting physical, relational, gender-laden images for self-disclosure. Some of these are feminine.

Inasmuch as God inspired the biblical authors to be gender inclusive, who are we not to be?



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THE SANDTRAY NETWORK

1946 Clemens Road Oakland, CA 94602
Phone (510) 530-1383 Fax (510) 530-1383

Email: Sandtray@rcn.com **Website:** www.sandtray.org

The Network Council: The Sandtray Network is a non-profit organization governed by the Council Members Carol Azzaro, Gisela De Domenico, Auguste Elliott, Mary Herza, Julia Richardson, and Diane Simon.

Please consider joining our Council. Currently we have an annual visioning retreat, our annual meeting and community workshop, and several work days during the year when we all come together.

Council Committee

Most of the play and work of the network is done in committees. Step forward and give time and energy to the Network community by joining the following Council committees:

Journal: Carol Azzaro, Gisela S. De Domenico, Auguste Elliott. We welcome adjunct readers.

Journal Keeper: Carol Azzaro

Archives: Auguste Elliott

Network Membership: Bijili Abbey

Treasury: Julia Richardson

Website and Advertising: Carol Azzaro

Publicity, Volunteer Coordinators, Retreats:

Mary Herza and Diane Simon

Hospitality: Mary Herza

Newsletter: Julia Richardson, Diane Simon.

Mailing: Bijili Abbey, Diane Simon

Conference Holder: Mary Herza

Secretary at Council Retreat: Auguste Elliott and Carol Azzaro

Agenda Coordinator: Gisela De Domenico, Auguste Elliott and Diane Simon.

Network Membership

Anyone interested in the educational, healing and transformational applications of sandplay is urged to join and support our Network.

To join us or renew your Sandtray Network Membership:

Fill out the enclosed Member Application or Contact us at sandtray@rcn.com or Download a membership application at www.Sandtray.org

**The Winter 2004
Sandtray Network Journal**



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The Sandtray Network Journal is the official publication of The Sandtray Network. The Journal is published twice yearly. A Newsletter is published periodically with updates about Network business and events.

Disclaimer: The articles contained in this journal represent the views and opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the attitudes and opinions of the Sandtray Network. Some articles may be printed to stimulate thought and, in some cases, to arouse controversy. We print these articles so that you may read what your colleagues and other professionals are doing and thinking. We also believe that learning is enhanced when all sides of an issue are exposed, allowing each individual to develop his or her views. While you may not agree with all the views expressed, we hope that this journal will stimulate you to respond and share your views, expertise and experience with journal readers.

Community Announcements



The Sandtray Network Community is looking for an assistant treasurer, a membership chair, a website curator, two grant writers and two conference-workshop co-coordinators to work with Mary Herza, our conference holder, for 2004-2006. Reach Mary at 510-273-9772.

The Council invites national participation of our members in all aspects of visioning, administering and carrying out the projects of the Sandtray Network.

Please contact any member of our council at sandtray@rcn.com

A Call for Research

We invite members and readers who are interested in researching the use of Sandtray-Worldplay and sandplay to explore people's ancestral connections and their unique cultural, multicultural, ethnic, and multiethnic experiences to contact:

Auguste Elliott at sabinpond@aol and Gisela S. De Domenico at sandndtrayworldplay@rcn.com





The Sandtray Network

The Mission

- We actively promote learning, healing and creativity through the use of the sandtray.
- We share and witness authentic experiences of the human psyche in the sandplay journey:
 - We offer substantive presentations and experiential explorations at our community meetings
 - We inspire and develop the exchange of ideas and information in our journal, on-line, and at our conferences.

Our Objectives

- To support the many ways of using the sandtray
- To promote the use of the sandtray for the benefit of the local, national and global communities
- To compile a resources and reference library for the use of the community-at-large
 - To disseminate information about sandtray methods to the greater community
 - To implement the use of the sandtray in a wide variety of settings
 - To explore the use of sandtray as an interpersonal communication tool to bridge ethnic and cross-cultural barriers

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