

Teachers who have found the first edition of this book useful in the classroom will be grateful to Wisdom Publications for making this new version available. Leighton originally wrote *Bodhisattva Archetypes: Classic Buddhist Guides to Awakening and Their Modern Expression* (Penguin Arkana, 1998) to suggest how the ideals represented by the various bodhisattva figures in (especially) East Asian Buddhist traditions were yet meaningful for late modern and postmodern Westerners at the end of the twentieth century. Understood archetypically, the bodhisattvas present psychological and spiritual resources for enlightened awareness, activity, and ways of living. *Bodhisattva Archetypes* introduced seven major figures in seven chapters – Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin in Chinese, Kannon in Japanese), Kṣitigarbha (Jizō in Japanese), Maitreya, and Vimalakīrti – preceded by introductory overviews on the bodhisattva ideal as benefiting beings, the major sutras and schools of the Mahāyāna tradition, the ten pāramitās (what Leighton calls the "transcendent practices"), and concluding with a short chapter inviting the reader to awaken to and sustain embodiment of the bodhisattva ideals in our time.

The entire text of *Bodhisattva Archetypes* has been preserved in *Faces of Compassion*, even if slightly revised, very briefly expanded in a few places, and with a few shifted paragraph breaks here and there. The helpful iconographic illustrations of the bodhisattvas have been reproduced again, along with the summary "Bodhisattva Archetypes Chart" at the end and the endnotes (with one additional note in the new version). The primary differences in the new edition include: a Foreword by Joan Halifax; section titles that have been renamed, added, or deleted; and an expanded annotated bibliography with some new literature since the first edition appeared as well as other materials. The new edition may be more student-friendly, particularly for those who prefer a greater amount of marginal space (created by the expansion of the 5x7 inch Arkana to the 6x8 inch Wisdom edition).

As a fine review of *Bodhisattva Archetypes* has already been written for readers of *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* from a scholarly Buddhist perspective (see Franz Aubrey Metcalf's review in volume 7 of *JBE*; <http://www.buddhistethics.org/7/metcalf001.html>), allow me to approach *Faces of Compassion* from the perspective of a comparativist. This angle is just as important, I suggest, given Leighton's intention of writing for a Western audience that may desire a more in-depth initiation into the beliefs and practices of the Mahāyāna tradition. I divide my comparative remarks into three sections: religious, ethical, and theological.

From a comparative history of religions perspective, Leighton's overview of the Mahāyāna tradition in the first three chapters and, especially, the seven bodhisattva ideals, constitutes an imaginative and effective introduction to the world of East Asian Buddhism. As a priest/practitioner for over twenty years in the Sōtō Zen tradition (mostly in the USA), a translator/editor of various Zen texts (including Zen masters Hongzhi and Dōgen, among others), a faculty member at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and founder of and Dharma teacher at

Mountain Source Sangha in the San Francisco Bay Area (see <http://www.mtsource.org/>), Leighton not only has the academic background to engage the scholar, but also has the experience of helping laypersons understand the world of Buddhism that enables him to render accessible the subtleties and obscurities of the Mahāyāna tradition. *Faces of Compassion* is remarkable in the way that it opens up the beliefs and practices of Mahāyāna Buddhism to comparativists whose strengths are in another religious tradition. This occurs at two levels. At one level, Leighton expertly introduces the bodhisattva ideal and its seven exemplifications by presenting the texts, places, iconography, practices, and associated stories of each bodhisattva as windows into the historical context of the archetype. While most historians will require much more historical detail than given here, enough is given to situate the bodhisattva ideals in the lives of Buddhist practitioners across the centuries.

This leads to the second level especially pertinent to a comparative perspective: how the bodhisattva ideals have functioned in Buddhist practices across space and time. Here, theories of symbolic engagement developed by thinkers such as Paul Tillich and, more recently, Robert Cummings Neville, both illuminate the reading of *Faces of Compassion* and are empirically specified by the bodhisattvic practices of the Mahāyāna tradition. By this, I mean that Leighton's articulation of how the bodhisattvas have been engaged by Buddhists demonstrates the ways in which the archetypes have "worked"—or, more specifically, how they have nurtured human wholeness, healed human estrangement/alienation, and transformed human lives and communities. This assumes, as the Tillichian/Nevillean theory suggests, that religious symbols not only point beyond themselves, but also can be true or false in terms of if and how they carry over religious values into the lives of devotees. In Leighton's terms, *Faces of Compassion* shows that the bodhisattvas are both "external forces" and "internal energies to be fostered." (p. 27) As such, the bodhisattva figures are effective and even truthful means of religious engagement. Practitioners are effectively transformed through sustained interaction with the bodhisattva archetypes: visually through bodhisattva iconography, cognitively through meditation on the bodhisattva examples and stories, verbally through chanting rituals utilizing bodhisattva mantras, and so on. In these ways, Buddhist piety is communicated through the stories, art, morals, and worldview embodied in and mediated by the various bodhisattva symbolic forms, and Leighton shows how the transformative power of the ideals are thereby experienced in practice.

This leads to remarks from the perspective of comparative ethics. Of course, we come here to the level upon which Leighton ultimately intends to engage his Western audience: that of inviting his readers to not only understand but also inhabit the bodhisattvic reality described in his text. The emphasis on the ten pāramitās—perfections, virtues, or "transcendent practices"—and their embodiment in the bodhisattva figures is less for historical detail than for ethical purposes. Giving (*danā*), morality or ethical conduct (*śīla*), forbearance/patience (*kṣānti*), striving/effort (*vīrya*), meditation (*dhyāna*), insight/wisdom (*prajñā*), skillful means (*upāya*), vow/commitment (*praṇidhāna*), powers (*bala*), and

knowledge (jñāna); each of these perfections are important precisely because they are needed in our contemporary world. The many modern and recent exemplars provided for by the ancient archetypes are means of reinforcing the message that the bodhisattvic realities remain just as relevant to our late modern times.

Comparatively speaking, one way that *Faces of Compassion* advances the discussion of contemporary ethics is by presenting a kind of virtue-ethics from the East Asian Mahāyāna tradition that compares and contrasts with that developed by Aristotle and recently retrieved by Alasdair MacIntyre, among others. Leighton's language of "transcendent practices" accomplishes two goals in this regard. First, it provides a kind of (transcendental) normativeness to the ethical perspective that the development of the theological virtues also sought to bestow in the Western tradition. Second, it calls attention to the embodied, concrete, and this-worldly dimension of the bodhisattva ideals: the entire goal of the bodhisattva is to bring about the alleviation of suffering, to awaken sentient beings to reality as it is, and to affect (i.e., in practice) the transformation of the conventional world. Hence there is an ethical goal and orientation to the bodhisattva ideals which bridges the "distance" between the bodhisattvas as "external forces" and our lives in this world. The ten pāramitās are ethically true, powerful, and transformative in as much as they are embodied not only in the bodhisattva figures but also in the daily lives and practices of their devotees.

Last for our purposes, *Faces of Compassion* invites commentary from a wide range of comparative theological perspectives. Of course, Buddhist "theology" is not theological in the traditional monotheistic sense of the term. At the same time, readers with a background in the Christian tradition cannot but notice the structural similarities between the bodhisattva archetypes and many of the Christian theological symbols: bodhisattvas vow to return to the world of saṃsāra to achieve the salvation of all sentient beings, even as the Christian Incarnation is predicated on the Son of God taking on the form of a slave to the point of death to achieve the salvation of humankind; Mañjuśrī rides a lion and wields a sword, as does Jesus Christ in the Apocalypse; Avalokiteśvara the bodhisattva of compassion also appears as a fierce and wrathful horse-head deity, even as Jesus Christ is both lamb and lion; Kṣitigarbha is the bodhisattva of the earth and the underworlds, appearing sometimes even as Yama, the ruler of hell, just as God creates both light and darkness and is manifest (according to Luther) in his "left hand" as the devil himself; Matriya the coming bodhisattva inspires social and political revolutions, even as the second coming of Jesus inspires millenarian movements; and so on, just to name the more obvious analogues. One suspects that these comparisons will serve as bridges for some to enter more sympathetically into the world of the bodhisattvas, even while they will serve as instruments for others to deepen their existing Christian faith.

At the same time, other comparative projects are needed precisely because the bodhisattvas are also very different from the transcendent theisms of Christian, Judaism and Islam. This may mean that the more adequate comparisons are

between bodhisattvas and (Christian) saints. But it may also mean that comparative theological perspectives need to be deeply grounded in religious practices as much as in religious doctrines, ideas, or beliefs. In this case, of course, the value of Faces of Compassion is precisely that it both calls for and enables such comparative projects of theological praxis because the bodhisattvas are prototypes for spiritual and ethical transformation as much as they are doctrinal symbols.

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