



4a. Type of God: Goddess of Mercy (with 1000 arms and 1000 eyes)

Chinese names/ titles:

Guan Yin (Mandarin)
Kwan Yin (Cantonese)
Avalokitesvara (Indian)
Nam Mo Quan The Am Bo Tat (Vietnamese)
Goddess of Compassion, Mercy, and Kindness

Birthday/ date of Celebration:

Birthday – 19th day of the second month of the lunar calendar
Ordination as a nun – 19th day of the sixth month
Becoming a Bodhisattva – 19th of the ninth month

Legend:

There are many legends and images of Guan Yin having multiple arms. This story is about the incarnation of Guan Yin as the third daughter of a cruel king named Miao Zhuangwang. This daughter, named Miaoshan, had two older sisters. When they were all of marriageable age, the King decided to pick out a husband for each of them. The two eldest daughters

agreed with their father's wishes but Miaoshan did not. She wanted to devote herself to Buddhism. Angry for not abiding by his wishes the King banished Miaoshan from the palace and ordered people to treat her very badly. Soon after, the King became very ill. A monk told him that he needed medicine made from the eyes and arms of one of his daughters. The two older daughters refused to sacrifice themselves. Miaoshan, out of compassion for her father, took out her eyes and cut off her arms to make the medicine. After the King recovered he found out that the medicine was made from the daughter whom he had banished. He begged the Heavens to let Miaoshan grow back her eyes and arms and miraculously a thousand arms and eyes started growing back. King Zhuangwang was so happy that he himself became a Buddhist. Thereafter Guan Yin was revered as "the Bodhisattva Guan Yin who has a thousand arms and a thousand eyes, great in mercy and great in compassion".

Note: In certain pictures you will see an eye in the palm of each hand.