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Kwan Zeon Bosal

(Kkey of Em, Open Tuning)

Kwan Zeon Bosal Kwan Zeon Bosal

Kwan Zeon Bosal Kwan Zeon Bosal

Kwan Yin is the Chinese name for the Bodhisattva of Compassion. In the Far East, this Bodhisattva is female; Avalokitesvara is an associated male form. The ideographs which in Mandarin Chinese are pronounced ‘Kwan-yin,’ are pronounced ‘Kwan-on’ in Korean and ‘Kan-on’ in modern Japanese. ‘Kwan-ze-on’ (Korean) and ‘Kan-ze-on’ (Japanese) are variants of this name. In this form the name means, ‘She who perceives (Kwan) the sounds (on) of the world (ze);’ that is, ‘she who witnesses the distress of beings in the world, who hears their cries, and accords them mercy.’ ‘Bosal’ is the same as ‘Bosatsu’ (Japanese) or ‘Bodhisattva’ (Sanskrit).

Ruth St. Denis performed a dance called “White Jade” embodying the being of Kwan Yin. Relating to her experience she wrote a poem, the last four lines of which are:

I am Kuan Yin, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
All men and women and children and all beasts,
All creeping creatures and all flying things receive my love.
For I am Kuan Yin, the Mother Merciful, who hears and answers prayer.


The common Korean pronunciation of this mantra is 'Kwan-se-eum bosal'. The mantra in Korean Zen is chanted Kwan Zeon Bosal, and not "Kwan Zeon Bosai". This write-up reflects the correction in the mantra made in 2015 by the Guidance Council. Although this dance has been led for many years with the originator’s pronunciation, the Guidance Council suggests Dance leaders may now want to begin leading this Dance using the correct pronunciation.
Kwan Zeon Bosal

1. Kwan Zeon Bosal
2. Kwan Zeon Bosal
3. Kwan Zeon Bosal
4. Kwan Zeon Bo

Dance begins and moves to the left or clockwise. There are three sets of movements for each cycle. Walking is continuous and begins with the right foot, four steps per phrase.

First time through: These movements are associated with the three refuges.
1. Beginning walking to the left, the hands are held palm to palm above the head.
2. Hands are held palm to palm at the throat.
3. Hands are held palm to palm at the heart.
4. Hands slowly move down to waist level and out to either side, in blessing.

Second time through: These are gesturing the outpouring of compassion from the heart.
1. Continuing to walk, the left hand is placed on the right shoulder of the person in front. The glance is toward the fingertips of the right hand throughout this cycle. The right arm is extended and raised to above the center of the circle with the palm up.
2. The right arm is lowered slightly (to about the throat level).
3. The right arm is lowered still more so that it is extended horizontally at heart level toward the center of the circle.
4. Turn right hand palm down and slowly lower arm in blessing.

Third time through:
1-3. Continuing to walk, the arms are held as if cradling an infant. This infant can be seen as the first person who comes to mind, the wounded child in oneself, a person one knows to be in need, one’s family or community, or as the entire world. The arms may gradually expand to include more so that the final movement flows naturally from it.
4. On the final ‘Bo,’ the arms are lowered with the palms extended down and out to either side as in blessing. The third phase of the Dance is reminiscent of the Buddhist walking meditation in which one feels that one is walking on the heads of all sentient beings, with each step a blessing.

Variations

A. For the second set of movements, dancers may walk with left hand cupped under heart and right hand moving from heart out and down, as though taking dew drops of compassion and bestowing them upon the earth. (Some representations of Kwan Yin have her holding such a vase.) This variation works well when the circle is small and the arm on shoulder position would tighten the circle too much.

B. Have men sit in the center of the circle, facing out. If possible, men should sit in half lotus position, hands on knees. Acting as the Dot in the Circle, men chant ‘Om’ or ‘Om Mani Padme Hum’ for the duration of the Dance as women sing the Kwan Zeon chant and dance movements described in movements 1-4.

Words: traditional Korean
Music and movements: original teachers’ manual lists source as Woodstock area.
Om Tara Partner Dance

(Key of Cm, Open Tuning)

Om tare tare ture soha

Om tare tare ture soha

Om tare tare ture soha

Om ma-ni pe-me hung. Om ma-ni pe-me hung.

For attunement, see Om Tara Dance.
Om tare tare ture soha
Praise to Tara, Praise to the Great Mother, who liberates from suffering, who grants all successes.
Om Tara Partner Dance

1. Om Tare Tu Tare Ture Soha
2. Om Tare Tu Tare Ture Soha
3. Om Tare Tu Tare Ture Soha
4. Om Tare Tu Tare
5. Ture Soha
6. Om mani peme hung
7. Om mani peme hung

Establish partners and line of progression.

1. Partners hold right hands clasped at approximately heart height, elbows are bent and place their left hands on their own heart. Turn slowly once clockwise. First right step on ‘Ta,’ first left step on ‘Tu,’ etc.; eight steps. In the pause after Soha there is time to gracefully release held hands and change direction ready for moving anti-clockwise as in 2.

2. Partners hold left hands, right hands on own hearts and repeat same movements turning anti-clockwise.

3. Partners face each other and give heart to heart embrace.

4. Partners join hands at hara level (three fingers below navel) and half-turn clockwise.

5. Partners bow to each other with hands joined at the heart in prayer position.

6. All join hands in circle and take two steps in and two steps out for one repetition of the mantra. Right foot steps in on ‘ma,’ left foot steps in on ‘pe.’ Right foot steps out on ‘hun-’, left out on ‘-g.’

7. Repeat 6.

Words: traditional
Music and movements: Philip Tansen O'Donohoe
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