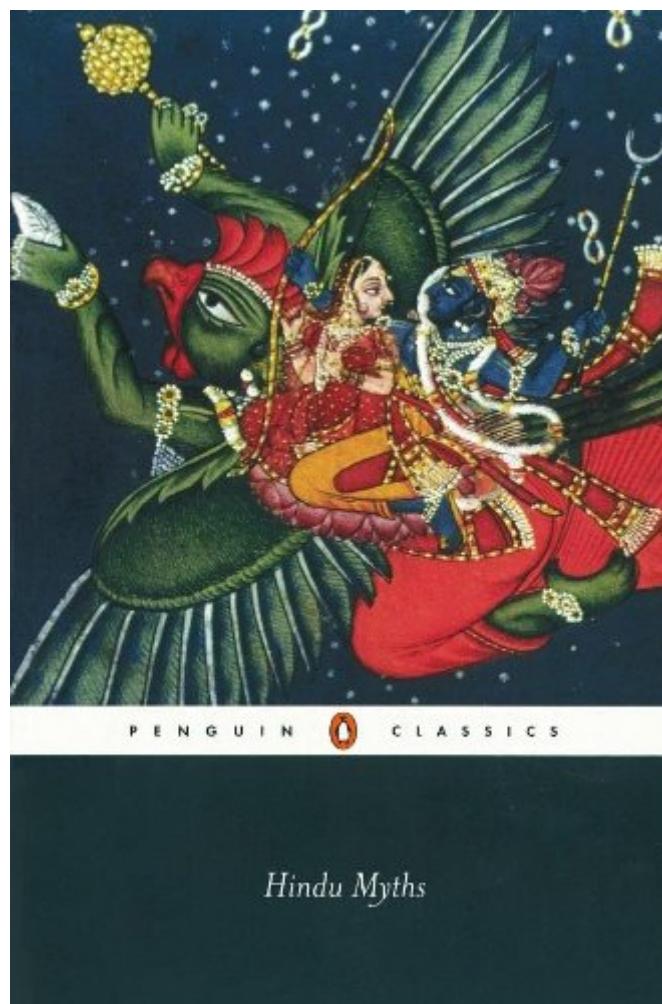


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Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook Translated From The Sanskrit (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Recorded in sacred Sanskrit texts, including the Rig Veda and the Mahabharata, Hindu Myths are thought to date back as far as the tenth century BCE. Here in these seventy-five seminal myths are the many incarnations of Vishnu, who saves mankind from destruction, and the mischievous child Krishna, alongside stories of the minor gods, demons, rivers and animals including boars, buffalo, serpents and monkeys. Immensely varied and bursting with colour and life, they demonstrate the Hindu belief in the limitless possibilities of the world - from the teeming miracles of creation to the origins of the incarnation of Death who eventually touches them all.

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Customer Reviews

I am a Hindu and am not one bit bothered by the author's translation or her perceived 'agenda', if there is one. The fact is that the religion she writes about has far longer survived the likes of the Greeks, the Romans etc. who also had many religious and cosmological myths. Where are those civilizations now? Hinduism which has not only been around far longer and continues to influence people in positive ways, has its own vitality and needs no defense. Perhaps it is because Hinduism teaches that all spiritual paths are equally valid. "One God, many paths". Ultimately everyone is

pursuing happiness in their own way, however mistaken that path may seem to others. Hinduism is but one spark from the divine Mind. Only those people bother to find shortcomings with others' beliefs who sub-consciously doubt or fear their own, and want comfort and justification (validation) by influencing others to come over to their point of view. Love to all.

This is not a book on Hinduism, but on the traditional stories of the Vedic religion. Doniger O'Flaherty is a competent, respected scholar who knows this material inside out and, of course, knows Sanskrit extremely well. Her translations are readable and her notes are good. She gives readers a path through the luxuriant jungles of ancient Sanskrit literature and scholarship. If you're looking for a devotional aid, this isn't it; if you're looking for modern Hinduism, it's not that either. But if you're interested in what stands behind the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Rig Veda, this is a good place to start. There are copious references to Sanskrit sources and there is a good bibliography (though as the book is now 35 years old, the bibliography is getting a bit dated).

This book gives an excellent overview of Hindu mythology and its development. There are sections for each major deity. Numerous notes and comparisons by the translator make it easy to compare aspects of different Hindu texts, highlighting political, philosophical, mythological, societal and ritualistic outlooks and changes in same as the Hindu religion developed from the Vedas of the ancient Aryans to modern Hinduism.

The organization of the book makes it a great reference book, but if you desire to read the Vedas from beginning to end, this book is not it. The prose translation captures the facts fairly accurately, though it does lack information on how these Myths manifest itself and how these myths came to be. As the title suggests, it is really meant to be a source book for research and quick reference. Gods and demons are broken into sections, so if you need to find the Samsa Veda text regarding Visnu, this book will make critical writing a joy and allow you to focus on the essay instead of searching the library for a short paragraph.

The book addresses the difficult task of giving an overview of Hindu myths, with the relevant content. Naturally the book is a part-reference and a part-survey kind of book. The range of the themes are adequate; covers the major aspects- Vedas, Vedic gods, the evolution of purna Gods SIVA, VISHNU, DEVI. The last chapter deals with the objectives of Vedic mythology, Epic mythology and Puranic mythology. This is an interesting part of the book. No way, such analysis will have

acceptance from all.

Very good specific read

Very hard to follow at times. Came promptly and was in great condition but was disappointed with the actual book. There's probably a better Hindu Myths book that isn't so hard to understand or to follow.

To be honest, I wish this book was quite a bit longer than it is. It's much too brief and not nearly comprehensive enough, though it does give one a broad overview of Hindu mythology. Wendy Doniger obviously has her own biases, but I find the bullying tactics (e.g. the deluge of negative reviews here on) of fundamentalist Hindus who disagree with her views rather distasteful. My personal opinion is that this book deserves 3 stars at most (for being too brief and not comprehensive enough) but I'm giving it 5 stars on to balance out the bullies.

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