



Myths of the Asanas: The Stories at the Heart of the Yoga Tradition

By Alanna Kaivalya, Arjuna van der Kooij

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Practitioners around the world reap the physical benefits of yoga, assuming poses and frequently calling them by their Sanskrit names. While many know that hanumanasana is named for the deity Hanuman, few understand why this is the case. Behind each asana and its corresponding movements is an ancient story about a god, sage, or sacred animal, much like Aesop's fables or European folktales. Myths of the Asanas is the first book to collect and retell these ancient stories. The myths behind yoga's spiritual tradition have the power to help students of all levels realize their full potential. Meditating on the tolerance of trees while standing in tree pose can help one become more tolerant. Learning how the disfigured sage Astavakra came to be the teacher of a king can liberate us from anxieties about our external appearance and our self imposed limitations. Marveling at Hanuman's devotion to Ram can serve as a source of spiritual strength and determination. With more than sixty beautiful illustrations to frame the stories, Myths of the Asanas will add a new dimension to your practice and study of yoga.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Alanna and Arjuna moved down an amazing road of story and myth that truly enhances our yogic lessons. Some of the nuances of ethics, posture, breath, and meditation can only be touched through metaphor and mythology and we thank them for taking us on this journey.“

—Rodney Yee, instructor & co-director of Piedmont Yoga Studio

“What I love most about this treasure of a book is that it faithfully reminds me of the roots behind our modern day approach to yoga. I am truly grateful to Alanna and Arjuna for providing us with such a delightfully accessible handbook on the vibrant history of our practice.”

—Rusty Wells, instructor & founder of the Urban Flow Yoga Studio

“Myths of the Asanas has a lyrical essence that comes forth in its story telling.”

—Ana Forrest, founder of Forrest Yoga

About the Author

Alanna Kaivalya, also known as "The JivaDiva," produces the JivaDiva Yoga Jam podcast, which has been heard by over a million people worldwide. In March 2008, Yoga Journal named Alanna one of the top twenty teachers under forty. She is a contributing writer to Yoga Journal, she regularly teaches at Yoga Journal conferences. She lives in New York City.

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