



## **Ganesha Goes to Lunch: Classics From Mystic India**

*Kamla K. Kapur*

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## **Ganesha Goes to Lunch: Classics From Mystic India** Kamla K. Kapur

King Kubera was the greediest man in the world. Hated and feared by many, he schemed to win the love of the beautiful goddess Parvati . . . but learned an important lesson when he invited her elephant-headed son Ganesha over for lunch one day . . . So goes one of the many delightful tales in this decidedly grown-up book of traditional Indian stories, retold for the modern reader. Author Kamla Kapur is well known in her native India as a poet and playwright, and her connection to these age-old stories is the reverent yet individualistic one we might expect from someone whose introduction tells of her hometown, where naked, dreadlocked holy men speed about on motorbikes. To collect these stories, Kapur relied on ancient sacred texts, modern scholarship, and chance encounters with interesting people who just happened to know a really good one about this time that Vishnu sank into the ocean, was incarnated as a pig, and had a really wonderful time. Like myths around the world, these are teaching stories that offer both a window into a fascinating culture that has endured for thousands of years, and a code for living that can be applied to the modern world.

## **Ganesha Goes to Lunch: Classics From Mystic India Details**

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## **From Reader Review Ganesha Goes to Lunch: Classics From Mystic India for online ebook**

### **Dan says**

“The material world and its comforts exist for our delight, but you cannot destroy society and Mother Earth to get them. Learn what is enough, and remember that true wealth can only be built on the foundation of humility and love.”

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### **Jonathan Watts says**

This is a wonderful collection of some lovely Hindu stories retold by a master storyteller. I had the pleasure of meeting Kamla last month, and she's a wonderful writer/poet/activist. This collection of stories has a great flow to it... from beginning to end I was completely absorbed. If you have any interest in the folklore of India, I highly recommend this book.

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### **Knit Spirit says**

Ce livre est très intéressant car il reprend les principaux mythes de l'Inde dont l'histoire Ganesh mais bien évidemment aussi l'histoire des 3 principaux Dieux : Vishnu, Brahma et Shiva. A la fin, certaines parties de l'épopée Mahabharata sont racontées, c'est ce qui m'a le moins plus. Lors de ma formation pour devenir prof de yoga, j'avais lu et étudié la Bagavad Ghita que je n'avais pas tellement appréciée et ce poème étant une petite partie de cette épopée, je n'ai pas été très surprise que cela ne me plaise pas non plus. Cela parle essentiellement de guerre et c'est un sujet que je n'affectionne pas vraiment. Par contre, j'ai beaucoup apprécié le reste du livre que j'ai trouvé très intéressant. Je connaissais certaines histoires, pas d'autres. En bref : une belle découverte !

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### **Justin says**

A somewhat enjoyable and philosophical read. It didn't pull me in enough to keep me motivated to read, but I imagine most other people would like it.

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### **Jaideep Khanduja says**

<http://pebbleinthewaters.blogspot.com>...

Book Review: Classic Tales From Mystic India by Kamla K Kapur: A Mystical Mist of Myths

Classic Tales from Mystic India by Kamla K. Kapur published by Jaico Books is a fantastic read interestingly woven around the epic saga of Indian mythological stories about the Gods belonging to various

era. Every country in the world has its own mythologies and stories woven around their myths. Indian mythology is quite rich in that aspect. The stories are not only woven so interestingly that they create an atmosphere of new learning and knowledge gaining, but it opens a new perspective for our learning acquired earlier.

Full marks go to the author Kamla K. Kapur for choosing the collection of stories for each of the section and also for presenting these sections in a chronological sequence in her book *Classic Tales from Mystic India*. Basically the book has 6 sections. It starts with *Stories of Vishnu* where we have four interesting stories. The next section is about the *Stories of Brahma* with two stories. In next section of the *Stories of Shiva, Parvati and Ganesha* we will have a collection of three stories related to Lord Shiva. Next to it comes *A Story of Krishna* and some *Parables* where we will have bundle of four stories revolving around Krishna. The next section is *Stories from the Ramayana* having a collection of five interesting stories. And the last section is *Classic Tales from Mystic India* in which we will have a treat of six stories from the mythological saga of Pandavas and Kauravas.

Overall *Classic Tales from Mystic India* by Kamla K. Kapur is a beautiful bouquet of 24 stories stored in 158 pages where each page promises to give you a new amount of information related to the mythologies of India. A must read for everyone for any age and in return you are bound to get a new bundle of information about of Gods and the life patterns during those era. The best part is the introduction information at the start of each section that gives you a proper base for the forthcoming stories in that section. In fact in the introduction part of each section I had some or the other piece of information that I didn't know earlier. Language is excellent and so are the illustrations related to the respective stories.

*Entirely Entangled* is a story of Narada and Vishnu where Vishnu demonstrates him the power of Maya. Narad gets to know about it only once he experiences it himself and thus witnesses its power and how immensely he himself got grasped into it. *On the Track of Love* is another interesting story in which Narada is under the impression that he is the biggest and greatest disciple of Vishnu. On the other hand Vishnu gets him involved into a small exercise to make him acquainted with the real truth of life.

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## **Helmut says**

### **Vishnus Traum jetzt am Broadway**

Die hinduistische Götterwelt kann man sich tatsächlich irgendwie wie einen Bollywood-Film vorstellen - *Vishnu* ist der Produzent, im Hintergrund, der die Materialien zur Verfügung stellt, *Brahma* der Regisseur, der alles steuert, *Shiva* und *Shakti* sind das dramatische Liebespaar und *Ganesha* der heimliche Held des Stücks.

Die Vorstellung, dass die Welt, wie wir sie kennen, nur ein Traum eines Gottes ist, der von einem anderen Gott gesteuert wird, hat schon einen gewissen Charme. Auch dass die hinduistischen Götter immer multidimensional sind, widersprüchlich in ihren Eigenschaften, gefällt mir sehr - es gibt kein Schwarzweiß im hinduistischen Pantheon. Als ersten Einblick in dieses Pantheon finde ich diesen Band wirklich gut, auch wenn es mir immer noch schwer fällt, mir zu merken, wer jetzt wann eine Inkarnation von wem ist.

Besonders gefällt mir die Geschichte "The Sinews of His Spirit", in der betont wird, dass es einem Gott egal ist, wie man ihn verehrt, und dass keiner einem anderen vorschreiben soll, wie er zu leben und zu beten hat - und dass Shiva keine Kriecher und Bücklinge will, sondern aufrechte, selbstbewusste Menschen.

Dramatisch wird es am Ende, wenn Szenen aus dem *Mahabharata* nacherzählt werden. Diese paar Seiten haben mich endgültig davon überzeugt, dass ich das *Mahabharata* und auch das *Ramayana* unbedingt lesen muss. Die Geschichte um den Vogel Chidra, der ein Heer aufhält, um seine Kinder zu retten - das ist ganz ganz großes Kino.

Ebenso großartig ist die Aufmachung, mit wunderschönen Illustrationen versehen, gutem Papier, Bindung, einem wunderschönen Einband, und einem durchgehenden sepiafarbenen Stil. Die Illustrationen allein sind schon den Eintrittspreis wert. Falls Sie die Premiere verpasst haben, und später nun am Eingang stehen - keine Sorge, das Rad des Lebens bleibt nicht nach einer Umdrehung stehen. Spätes Zustiegen ist kein Problem, und mit diesem Buch als Reiseführer für Anfänger wird sich auch Ihnen die Welt der hinduistischen Mythologie öffnen.

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### **Jack says**

I finally got around to learning a bit about Hindu deities, a topic I've been drawn to for years. This is a revamped, highly accessible collection of traditional stories about Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma and many of their incarnations. Definitely one I would want to read to children as they grow up, alongside Grimm, Silverstein, Dahl, Seuss and Carroll. Also helped me mentally commit to reading the unabridged Bhagavad Gita. Onward!

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### **Lauren says**

The composition is beautiful - mythology and art go hand in hand. The detailed cover art and the renderings throughout the book were a wonderful addition. Some of the stories are classics, and others are from a more oral tradition, told to Kapur from various sources. This oral tradition is particularly interesting, as many of these cited stories are new to me - including the title story of "Ganesha Goes to Lunch".

The book is broken up into sections, and each section includes a one-page introduction to a certain god and his feats.

Considering the vast nature of Hindu mythology, I wanted more from this book. Kapur focuses on the male gods, and the only goddess that gets any real screen time is Parvati in one incarnation (she's great!) but where are Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, and Kali?

If you are looking for a more comprehensive introduction to Hindu mythology, this is not it. However, it is a beautifully told and illustrated book of a sliver of the pantheon.

3.5 stars

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### **Diwakar Narayan says**

Did I love the book? Yes, I did... and I would keep this book for maybe my children to read. They contain morals, tell you about mythology in a modern way and teach you those lessons that our sacred texts have been teaching us for ages. Love, honesty, devotion, creation, justice, helpfulness, rivalry, peace, humanity

and what not – you get all of it. I loved it because I never heard some of its stories, I loved it because it had mature and vignetted language, I loved it because the stories are classic and I loved it because I love Indian Mythology.

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### **Biogeek says**

Finally someone who has taken my favorite stories from Indian myths and told them with the zest, energy and humor they deserve. I think this should be on a compulsory reading list for anyone thinking of discovering India, not just a "yoga teacher" as one reviewer on this site says. I am confused by another review that dismisses Kapur's writing as "soapy drivel" because in the same story he quotes in his review, she chooses to tell the tale from the perspective of Duryodhana, universally the villain of the *Mahabharata*. While reading that story I even caught myself agreeing with Duryodhana. This collection reminds us that these myths do not have to be deeply spiritual and serious.

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### **Mike says**

"Indian myth in particular has a genius for clothing the infinite in human form," writes the author in her introduction, which is one reason that this small collection of stories out of the Hindu tradition has such enormous appeal. Another reason is that Kamala Kapur, the author, is also a poet! Her imagery is lush and her language is musical, so not only are these myths a treat for the intellect, but they are a delight for the eye and ear as well.

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### **Prashanth Adurthi says**

Really interesting book interspersed with passages inappropriate for a kid :)..

good book all in all..

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### **Shalini M says**

If I have to sum it up in one word, it would be - boring. My recommendation to anyone familiar with, or interested in, stories of Indian mythology, is to seriously avoid it.

Let me clarify first - I have a keen interest in Indian mythology; I grew up listening to stories told by my grandmother, and reading them by bookloads as I grew older. They have always enchanted and intrigued me, always arousing a curiosity to find more - stories that I haven't come across, as well as hidden layers in the ones that I have. Which is why I am on the lookout for new books on this subject matter. I have read several adaptations of the *Mahabharata*, and enjoyed most of them.

I decided to buy this book based on the high Goodreads rating, and the blurb that indicated a promise of new stories, and of a retelling aimed for the modern reader. Disappointment would be an understatement, and the reasons are manifold. First, I have come across most of the stories earlier - only one or two were new to me.

Second, the narrative was painfully labored - rather than capturing the beauty of the story in a lucid style, the author seemed more intent on creating a beauty of language. Hence, long sentences filled with similes and adjectives, at times appearing to be semantically incorrect (could be my misunderstanding), but difficult to comprehend in any case. It also has deviations from the conventional threads, which I found rather jarring. Usually I am open to interpretations and interpolations (I loved the Immortals of Meluha, and appreciated the premise of Asura), but in this case, the incidences tampered with were a little too familiar to accept the change. The book comes with a beautiful cover, and wonderful imagery inside, but all I can say is that an attractive presentation cannot compensate for the appeal of content. I had to push myself to finish it; but for a flight and a considerable wait at the airport, I might have abandoned it.

A couple of stories into the book, I started wondering about the target audience. I felt that it is aimed for the western readers who view the ancient culture and tradition of the east as something exotic. An Indian reader would typically be familiar with the stories, and would have come across different yet interesting narratives of the same stories, and would not find an appeal in this collection. To get a counter-viewpoint, I had my brother take a look into it (he has a far greater knowledge of ancient texts like Puranas than I do), he dismissed it altogether.

After finishing the book, I looked at the sources cited by the author, and found that most of the material was drawn from books by foreign authors, and prominent amongst them were adaptations of Mahabharata and Ramayana by one author. I don't know how others feel about it, but I find it hugely ironic that an Indian author, to write a book on Indian mythology, would turn to a foreign author's retelling of the great Indian epics. However, this is just an afterthought, and has nothing to do with my impression of the book, as I saw it after finishing the book.

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### **Peggy Bechko says**

It wasn't quite what I was expecting, but I enjoyed it. A collection of mythological tales from India well told. I love Ganesha so was expecting a bit for with his mythology in them, but it was a very enjoyable read. I really enjoy a book no & again that's a collection so I can read one story & put it aside for a while - then read another.

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### **Jean-Pierre Virdrine says**

With the strong interest I have in mythologies, it's a little odd that I've been exposed to so little Hindu mythology. This book is a great introduction. Kapur retells classic and even not-so-ancient tales featuring figures of Hindu myth with a very poetic style that's so entertaining it feels like she's just saying what has to be said. Having already been so familiar with stories of the Greek and Norse gods and their battles with giants, titans, and each other, I was sort of expecting stories like those. Well, I didn't get them. Not to say that I was disappointed. Though there are a few mentions of mythical battles, such things are not the focus of most of the tales. Some are about such simple things as people living quietly in the wilderness, but Kapur makes such things seem extraordinary in reading. Of course, like any great myths, these tales provide valuable insights and spiritual lessons that everyone should know, no matter your religious path. What was really striking was Kapur's assertion that some of the tales featuring the Hindu deities were outright made up by Hindu clergy for the simple purpose of conveying a spiritual lesson. Fundamentalist Bible-beaters could learn a practical lesson from that. This book was a wonderful read and a great comfort during some dark

days. Plus, you can't pass up the wonderful title.

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