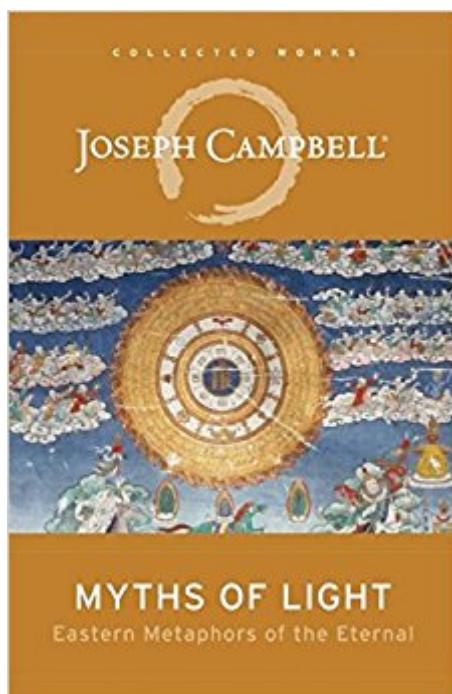


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# Myths Of Light: Eastern Metaphors Of The Eternal (The Collected Works Of Joseph Campbell)



## **Synopsis**

Master mythologist Joseph Campbell had a genius for finding the unifying symbols and metaphors in apparently distinct cultures and traditions. In *Myths of Light: Eastern Metaphors of the Eternal*, Campbell explores, with his characteristic clarity and humor, the principle that underlies all the great religions of India and East Asia, from Jainism and Hinduism to Buddhism and Taoism: the transcendent World Soul. Joseph Campbell began his comparative study of the world's religions with a chance meeting with the renowned Indian theosophist Jiddu Krishnamurti on a trans-Atlantic steamer. Though Campbell was deeply fascinated by mythologies and religions from every continent, Asia's potent mix of theologies captured his imagination more than any other, and offered him paths to understanding the essence of myth. In *Myths of Light*, Campbell explores the core philosophies and mythologies of the East, comparing them through vivid examples and stories to each other and to those of the West. A worthy companion to *Thou Art That* and to Campbell's Asian Journals, this volume conveys complex insights through warm, accessible storytelling, revealing the intricacies and secrets of his subject with his typical enthusiasm.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In this volume of previously unpublished lectures and articles, the late world folklorist and comparative mythologist Campbell extols the myths of Asian religions, though, as always, the whole of humanity is the author's intended audience. With jaunty, American optimism, Campbell delves

into the stories and imagery, as he defines them, of Buddhism and Yoga and other "Oriental" systems of belief, to find a well of deep humanistic wisdom in each one, sharply in contrast to the anti-spiritual habits of the West. "You may have practical ethics and that kind of thing, but there is no spirituality in any aspect of our contemporary Western civilization," Campbell writes, suggesting that Western society "is disintegrating as a result" of the loss of religious myth. Campbell molds his stories into Jungian vessels of mystical awe, finding recurring archetypes and story lines embedded in large swaths of the Asian continent; sometimes a sort of fetishizing awe towards the object of his study creeps in: "When one goes to the Orient, of course, one may be physically shocked by the squalor and misery of the people and the life they're living there. Yet this coordinating principle comes shining through all the poverty in a strangely fascinating way, shining with the radiance of this mythic world." Campbell excels in telling the stories themselves—which feature brahmins and yogis, gods and monsters, as they disguise themselves as charioteers, eat themselves up and spy on mortals—and in his glancing descriptions of traditions foreign to us: Japanese "play language," an exceedingly polite mode of speech, for instance, or Jainism's insistence on quenching "all desire for life." His persistent, unifying interpretations can sometimes deflate the power of these traditions, but this is nevertheless a solid primer. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Campbell has become one of the rarest of intellectuals in American life: a serious thinker who has been embraced by the popular culture." — Newsweek; Campbell excels in telling the stories themselves—which feature brahmins and yogis, gods and monsters, as they disguise themselves as charioteers, eat themselves up and spy on mortals—and in his glancing descriptions of traditions foreign to us: Japanese "play language," an exceedingly polite mode of speech, for instance, or Jainism's insistence on quenching "all desire for life."...A solid primer. — Publishers Weekly

I have a number of Joseph Campbell's books for personal enjoyment. However, I needed this one to find a specific passage to include in a book I am writing. I am so glad I got this little gem. This book has few pictures; yet, he gives marvelous explanations to compare various beliefs about light throughout the centuries. I was able to compare ideas from the Sankrit to modern neuroscience as well as to quantum physics. Joseph Campbell would be thrilled to see how his explanations of ancient metaphors continue to relate to the mysteries of the universe as they are contemplated today.

Impossible to find fault with genius. His insight leads the way to a commonality of cultures.

Fabulous book for anyone interested in Eastern mythology/spirituality. I am a psychotherapist, meditator, and yoga instructor and this was a fantastic read. A must for any Joseph Campbell fan.

the book was as i expected.

This is a very enjoyable read about the deep origins of human religions and culture. Don't pass it by.

While much of this material is available in other works by Professor Campbell, this easily readable (and everything by Campbell is) book is a clear, concise presentation. The editor did a wonderful service to Campbell's work and to those interested in understanding the transcendence beyond the myths of all religions. If you're tired of the religious orthodoxy that promotes myths as historical truths and science, this book, along with all of Campbell's work, will be an oasis from the tired and trite weariness of fundamentalism.

great book and well composed by Joseph Campbell.

Good deal!

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