



Death Gods: An Encyclopedia of the Rulers, Evil Spirits, and Geographies of the Dead

By Ernest L Abel

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In cultures throughout human history people have believed that some part of themselves continued to exist after they died. Part of that belief is that living can influence what happens to the dead in the afterlife, and the dead can return from the afterlife to affect the living. *Death Gods: An Encyclopedia of the Rulers, Evil Spirits, and Geographies of the Dead* describes the many ways the afterlife—especially that part of the afterlife commonly known as Hell—has been characterized in myths from around the world. The hundreds of entries provide readers with a guide to the afterlife as portrayed in these myths - its geography, its rulers, its inhabitants, how they got there, and what happens after their arrival. While the Devil is a prominent resident and ruler of the afterworld in many religions, especially Christianity, this book examines many other versions of Hell whether presided over by the Devil, Hades, or one of the many other rulers of the dead.

Death Gods provides concise encyclopedic entries on all aspects of the mythology of the afterlife: The underworlds form the myths of cultures from across the globe—for example, Xibalba, the underworld of the Quiche Maya; Di Yu, the underground realm of the dead in Chinese mythology; the gods and demons of the afterlife—the Hindu god of death and justice Yama; Ahriman, the evil twin of the benevolent god Ahura Mazda in Zoroastrian mythology; Buso, the invisible ghouls who haunt graveyards and feed on human corpses in Philippine mythology. The volume includes an extensive bibliography of the most useful resources for understanding the mythology of death and the afterlife.

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Death Gods: An Encyclopedia of the Rulers, Evil Spirits, and Geographies of the Dead By Ernest L Abel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1061714 in Books
- Published on: 2009-03-20
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 10.05" h x .79" w x 7.22" l, 1.40 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 167 pages

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Review

"Enhanced with the inclusion of extensive references and a comprehensive index, *Death Gods* is a unique and highly recommended addition for personal, community, and academic library Metaphysical Studies, Mythology, and Religious History reference collections." - **Midwest Book Review - Internet Bookwatch**

"In this surprisingly slender, information-rich volume, Abel (*Intoxication in Mythology*) offers a genuinely global survey of the figures, places, and myths associated with death and the hereafter. The author engagingly defines afterlife figures and locales from Norse, African, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern, South Asian, Caribbean, Meso-American, and Western cultures. An excellent companion to Edith Hamilton's Greco-Roman focused book, *Mythology*, this is a vital reference for scholarly research and an absorbing read for the curious layperson. " - **Library Journal**

"Its coverage appears broad, including African, Chinese, Japanese, Polynesian, and Himalayan death gods often neglected in world mythology surveys, but the emphasis is still conventionally on Greek, Roman, European Christian, Egyptian, Mayan, and Aztec mythologies. In addition to the A-Z alphabetic listing, additional guides at the front, such as the 'Guide to Related Topics' and separate listing of 'Death Gods and Demons,' are helpful." - **ARBAonline**

"This is a handy starting place for those interested in world mythology. Abel provides an A-to-Z of names of gods, goddesses, demons and dark creatures associated with death and the afterlife. He covers societies from all over the world including Polynesia, Africa, Aboriginal Australia and pre-European America as well as many of the Judeo-Christian beliefs. Each entry is referenced for those wishing more information.' " - **Reference & Research Book News**

About the Author

ERNEST L. ABEL is Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Psychology at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. He is the author of more than 40 books and 200 publications. He is Past President of the Behavioral Teratology Society and the Fetal Alcohol Study Group of the Research Society on Alcoholism. In 1989, he was awarded the Distinguished Faculty Fellowship award by Wayne State University's Board of Governors.

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