



The Goddess Pose: The Audacious Life of Indra Devi, the Woman Who Helped Bring Yoga to the West

Michelle Goldberg

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When the woman who would become Indra Devi was born in Russia in 1899, yoga was virtually unknown outside of India. By the time of her death, in 2002, it was being practiced everywhere, from Brooklyn to Berlin to Ulaanbaatar. In *The Goddess Pose*, *New York Times* best-selling author Michelle Goldberg traces the life of the incredible woman who brought yoga to the West—and in so doing paints a sweeping picture of the twentieth century.

Born into the minor aristocracy (as Eugenia Peterson), Devi grew up in the midst of one of the most turbulent times in human history. Forced to flee the Russian Revolution as a teenager, she joined a famous Berlin cabaret troupe, dove into the vibrant prewar spiritualist movement, and, at a time when it was nearly unthinkable for a young European woman to travel alone, followed the charismatic Theosophical leader Jiddu Krishnamurti to India.

Once on the subcontinent, she performed in Indian silent cinema and hobnobbed with the leaders of the independence movement. But her greatest coup was convincing a recalcitrant master yogi to train her in the secrets of his art.

Devi would go on to share what she learned with people around the world, teaching in Shanghai during World War II, then in Hollywood, where her students included Gloria Swanson and Greta Garbo. She ran a yoga school in Mexico during the height of the counterculture, served as spiritual adviser to the colonel who tried to overthrow Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega, and, in her eighties, moved to Buenos Aires at the invitation of a besotted rock star.

Everywhere she went, Indra Devi evangelized for yoga, ushering in a global craze that continues unabated. Written with vivid clarity, *The Goddess Pose* brings her remarkable story—as an actress, yogi, and globetrotting adventuress—to life.

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