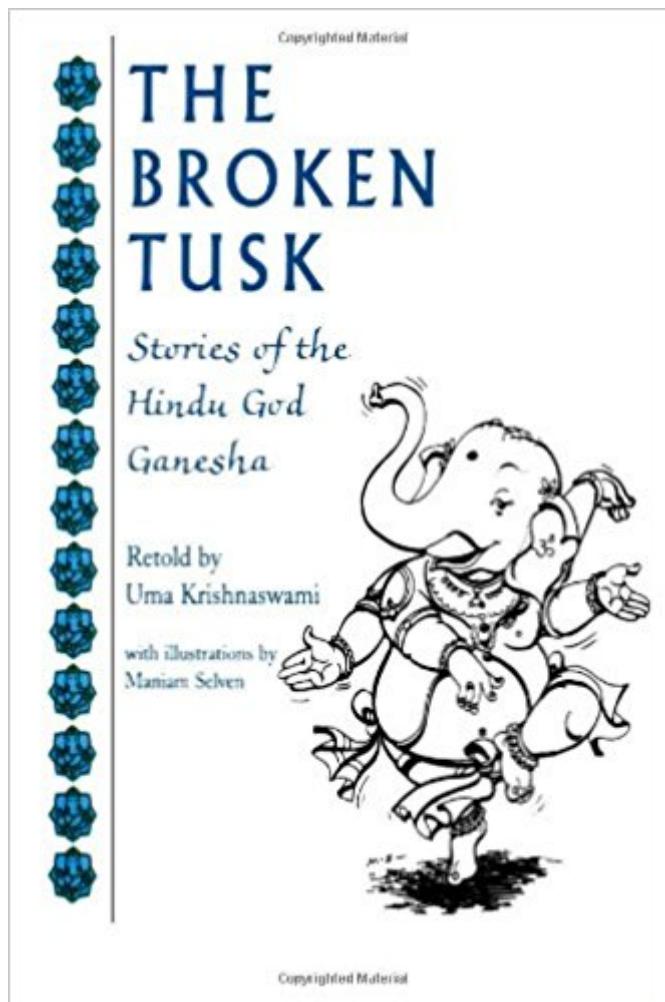


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# The Broken Tusk: Stories Of The Hindu God Ganesha



## **Synopsis**

Everyone makes mistakes, but it is the lessons we learn that are important. What better a character to introduce children to Hindu mythology than Ganesha, the god of new beginnings? Often impulsive, forever generous, the elephant-headed god with the fat belly makes mistakes but learns from them. He fills the world around him with laughter. These stories deliver up a pantheon of Hindu deities and support such concepts as nonviolence, respect for life, and the folly of vanity. This collection of Hindu folktales for middle readers features stories about the Hindu god, Ganesha, who is easily recognized because of his elephant head. Author, Uma Krishnaswami introduces the stories by recalling her own introduction to Ganesha and goes on to offer a mythological context for the tales. Included among these classic stories are "Ganesha's Head", "The Broken Tusk", and "Why Ganesha Never Married". Most of the stories come from Hindu legend; one comes from Mongolia, where Ganesha made his way into the Buddhist tradition. The simple pen-and-ink illustrations support the themes and a helpful pronunciation guide and glossary are also included.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Gr. 4^6, younger for reading aloud. It is rare to find a collection of Hindu folktales for middle readers; this one features stories about the god, Ganesha, who is easily recognized because of his

elephant head. Krishnaswami introduces the stories by recalling her own introduction to Ganesha and goes on to offer a mythological context for the tales. These introductory chapters are aimed at adults, but the 17 stories themselves will hit the mark for the intended audience. Included among the tales are "Ganesha's Head," "The Broken Tusk," and 'Why Ganesha Never Married." Most of the stories come from Hindu legend; one comes from Mongolia, where Ganesha made his way into the Buddhist tradition. The pen-and-ink illustrations have child appeal, and readers will be aided by the pronunciation guide and glossary. A useful addition to library shelves. Ilene Cooper --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Krishnaswami's retellings of Hindu myths from India about the elephant-headed god, Ganesha, which include variants of tales heard in childhood or found in later research, make an elegant and eminently readable volume that's a vital addition to any multicultural shelf. Useful prefatory sections on the whole of Hindu mythology point out that the stories continue to be living cultural and spiritual entities in a way that tales from Greek or Norse mythologies are not, aiming to inculcate a way of life that includes ideas from the Hindu faith. The focus on Ganesha happily clarifies the swirling complexity of Hindu tradition while also enabling readers to empathize with this most likable and humorous god. The question that springs immediately to many readers' minds- -why an elephant's head?--is entertainingly addressed in the first tale, along with the notions of reincarnation and filial responsibility. The latter notion expands in the next story, a clever narrative dealing with the relationship of child to parent. The book also includes one tale, ``The Birth of Phagpa," from the Buddhist tradition of Mongolia. Throughout, black-and-white illustrations depict Ganesha's childlike charm, even when he's under duress or stress, or in the throes of heartbreak. This book opens perceptual doors to a great and still vital Eastern tradition--a gift indeed. (pronunciation guide, lists of characters and Ganesha's names, glossary, sources) (Fiction/folklore. 10+) -- Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the most delightful book of stories about Ganesha! Every one makes me smile. Highly recommended. (Theoretically, the book is for children. But I am reading it with an adult who is learning English as a second language - and both my student and I have enjoyed every single story.)

I bought this book because I wanted to know the meaning of the symbol on my yoga mat. I think we

should all understand the symbols we display on our bodies, clothing, homes, etc...but I digress. This book is a colorful and interesting collection of stories about Ganesha. I am only 1/3 through it, but I have learned a great deal. For instance there is no learning of just one Hindu God. The lessons to the reader are conveyed through the interaction of many Gods, and people. I have thoroughly enjoyed the book so far, and I would definitely want to learn about other Indian Gods if similar books were available. Now, every time I look at the head of my yoga mat, it has such great meaning. Full disclosure: I am a westerner who enjoys being exposed to other cultures. My review is meant to be helpful to others with a similar background. I am sure people raised as Hindu's may have a different view of this book. I am grateful to have found it.

I used this book as a source for a research that I had to do, and I fell in love with it. The stories are beautiful and Ganesh is one of my favorite Hindu deities. I can't wait to read this to my kids for their bedtime story :)

I bought this book for my niece and nephew, but before I gave it to them I read it too. It brought back the stories of Ganesha I had been told in childhood, and made me smile at them again. It may not have the pictures of "How Ganesha got his elephant head", which I bought for another child, but the it has more stories of this altogether charming lovable god.

great book for kids and adults alike!

I really enjoyed how short the stories were. They manage to entertain but not bore the children with too much length. It wets their appetite for Ganesha enough that they want more. I also enjoyed the black & white images. They were whimsical and introduced the other Gods in a very "human"? manner. :D

The Broken Tusk tells seventeen different stories of Ganesha in easy reader format for second grade and up. The stories also lend themselves well to the read-aloud format for younger children. Many of my old favorites are here including the ones about how Ganesha got his elephant head and about how he made a "pradakshina" around his parents, into a trip around the world. Some might find the versions of certain stories here to be different from what they know. That is understandable considering how many of these have been passed along strictly through oral tradition. There are also some rarer stories here including one borrowed from Buddhist folklore. Krishnaswami has done

a thorough professional job with this one. She has prefaced the book with a brief introduction to Hindu mythology and to the god Ganesha himself. Also complementing the stories are a glossary of terms, a list of characters (kids would appreciate that!), a list of other names for Ganesha, and a pronunciation guide. Krishnaswami finishes every story she narrates with a line or two that ties the legend to modern day reality. For example, after the story about Ganesha's head, Krishnaswami explains that in Indian (especially South Indian) temples today, sometimes elephants are fed and maintained reverentially. These acts, Krishnaswami explains, probably acknowledge the sacrifice made by the elephant in the original story. Small explanations like these place the stories in context, a service that I think is especially useful. The last word belongs to the wonderful old-world illustrations by Maniam Selven that complement the stories wonderfully. With this book, Krishnaswami demonstrates that she is not only a gifted storyteller, she is also a thorough one. The Broken Tusk will get an enthusiastic nod not only from the young reading set but also from their grateful parents. This book is as charming as the elephant god himself!

This book was written to be a children's book, but in fact it is probably the best collection of storytelling about the mythology of Ganesha that I have ever found. The Hindu parthenon's mythology has always been passed along from generation to generation by tales of the Deity in its various forms. This exquisite book has all the well-known tales of Ganesh as well as some obscure stories and some tales from other lands and religions. I don't have kids but do delight in the simple stories that bring the attributes of Ganesha into light in simple, vivid parables of joy. If you love Ganesh like I love Ganesh, then this is a 'must have.' If you are a storyteller, this is the book that will be a Ganesh guide. If you just want a book that you can read story's in occasionally just to smile and search for meaning in, again, here'tis. This is a delightful exposing of this beloved Deity into Western civilization in our time. GAM.

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