



# Myths and Legends of the Polynesians

*By Johannes C. Andersen*

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**Myths and Legends of the Polynesians** By Johannes C. Andersen

This authoritative work, based on extensive field study and research, combines a wealth of Polynesian myths and legends with a lively commentary on the lives and culture of the Polynesians. The territory covered is the vast Pacific triangle formed by the Hawaiian Islands to the north, New Zealand to the south, and Easter Island to the east. Included are Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, the Marquesas, and many other island groups.

From these varying Polynesian cultures, ethnologist Johannes C. Andersen collected ancient stories of the gods and creation, of nature and the supernatural, of love and war, of adultery, revenge, cannibalism, human sacrifice, and more. As he recounts the tales, he compares and contrasts not only the legends but also the people of one island group with another, interweaving fascinating information about Polynesian history and customs.

The author's descriptions of the Polynesians and their ways are as interesting as the stories themselves. Noting that there are great variations of general characteristics among Polynesian peoples, he observes that "the finest physique was found among the Marquesans; the most estimable people were found among the Samoans; the most poetical and gentle among the Tahitians; the most religious and romantic among the Hawaiians; the most intellectual, and the most formidable warriors and military strategists among the Maori."

Over 75 illustrations — effigies of the war god Kukailimoku, the great stone status of Easter Island, a Maori boy and girl, Polynesian canoes, a Samoan round house, and many more — add superb visual interest to these fascinating stories of Uenuku the Maori chief, Pele the Fire Goddess, Eleio and the feather cloak of Hawaii, and a host of others. An extensive 42-page index and glossary of Polynesian-related terms will be of great help to those making a study of Polynesian culture.

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