

LAND
SKY
ORACLE

BY THERESA HUTCH

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*“The point is not to become a good meditator.
It is rather to become free” - Ram Dass*

LAND SKY ORACLE

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Reverend Jaganath Carrera who has inspired me for years with his readable translation of Inside the Yoga Sutras. He kindly granted me written permission to use the words from his book in this booklet. Thanks to Ramji for opening your home, sharing the ancient wisdom found in the foothills of the Himalayas, and helping me find the courage to sit and quiet my mind. Thanks to Ram Dass for inspiring me to dig deep into the nature of who I am. Special thanks to my husband Matt and my boys, Aidan and Elliott, for believing in me and teaching me that yoga is something we all can practice on and off the mat.

Introduction

I started learning yoga in the early 90s and I've been teaching yoga for over 10 years. After reading *Inside the Yoga Sutras* I thought, "This is it! I will connect these ancient teachings to my daily life." Then, like a puff of smoke, the words disappeared and I couldn't remember what to do. I'm a visual learner—images help me to remember things. The watercolor images in this deck are dedicated to others who learn through images.

As a yoga practitioner and teacher, I hope these cards are used as a stepping stone for your inner journey. Yoga, like other Eastern philosophies, isn't something you learn with your rational mind. It is rather something that you experience. You may feel a shift in your energetic, emotional and physical body. This internal shift then impacts the world around you.

I was inspired by my recent travels to Rishikesh, India to deepen my descriptions for the U.S. Games Systems edition of Land Sky Oracle. New animal illustrations and English translations have also been added to make the concepts easier to learn. For example, to illustrate Nonstealing I painted a raccoon that is clearly holding a stolen egg.

To understand the significance of this lesson, simply imagine yourself as that raccoon.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Yoga is not just about the physical poses you see in a magazine. Rather, yoga means to yoke, or join together, your mind, body and spirit. The Eight Limbs of Yoga are part of an ancient book by the Vedic sage Patanjali called *Yoga Sutras*. The text is comprised of 196 passages (sutras) that teach people yoga through mindfulness with little emphasis on the physical body. The Eight Limbs of Yoga can help you to see your path to real happiness. You gain freedom by harnessing your mind and living your truth.

WHAT IS THE LAND SKY ORACLE?

Land Sky Oracle is a 44-card deck with gentle illustrations that take you on a journey through the Eight Limbs of Yoga. It will guide you through these Eight Limbs with one Major card and five Minor cards for each Limb.

How to Live in the Material World

1. Yama — Honor Yourself
2. Niyama — Honor Others
3. Asana — Physical Postures
4. Pranayama — Breathwork

How to Live in the Immaterial World

5. Pratyahara — Turning inward
6. Dharana — Concentration
7. Dhyana — Meditation
8. Samadhi — Enlightenment

The first three Limbs focus on how to live in the material world. In this section, the Majors are all sacred cows that represent the material world (Land). They include Yama (honor others) and Niyama (honor yourself). These two young cows represent moral and ethical restraints. The third limb, Asana (physical postures) is a large, more mature bull. Most Western yoga classes only mention the physical postures (for example, tree pose) but there is so much more to yoga than the poses.

The fourth limb is Pranayama (breath-work) illustrated by a sacred bull with an owl on its head. It is the bridge between the material and immaterial world.

Limbs five through eight focus on how to connect to the immaterial world. In this section the Majors are all depicted as owls to represent the immaterial world (Sky). Each of these limbs contains a crystal, a ritual tool, an aim (seed of life), an obstacle (zigzag lines) and a deity to connect you to your practice. These four limbs

are: Pratyahara (turning inward), turning away from sensual cravings and aversions; Dharana (concentration), a one-pointed focus; Dhyana (meditation) an uninterrupted flow of consciousness; and Samadhi (enlightenment) bliss beyond duality.

WHAT LANGUAGE IS ON THE CARDS? WHY LEARN IT?

Some of the cards are written in Sanskrit, the ancient language of yogis. Classic yogic texts like Patanjali's Sutras and oral Indian traditions have been passed down through the ages in this language. Mantras such as the sound "OM" are realized sounds of light discovered by the rishis in a state of thoughtless reality. Sanskrit sounds emanate from five distinct mouth positions that exist on your palate. These five positions correspond to different points in the brain and/or body, which exponentially magnify their potency.

When you understand even basic Sanskrit, you can take a yoga class anywhere in the world. I took a class in Barcelona, Spain where although I didn't speak the language, I still understood the practice because they taught mostly in Sanskrit.

USING THE DECK

The Land Sky Oracle pairs well with other oracle and tarot decks. No yoga experience is necessary to use it. Every card has a keyword, focus and affirmation within each description. When you pull from this deck, feel your feet connect to the earth and mindfully breathe as you begin.

SACRED SPACE

Clear a space on an altar (puja) or the floor. Find things around your home that inspire you. Set up a clean space with some of the following: images of people you admire, candles, incense, sage, crystals, chimes, shells, or fresh cut flowers. Be mindful as you shuffle the cards. Allow yourself space to tap into your intuition.

LAND SKY MEDITATION*

Breathe through the space of your heart center.

Inhale the material world and think the word, “Land.”

Exhale “Land” out through the top of your head into the immaterial world.

Breathe in and bring the immaterial world from the top of your head down into your heart center and think the word “Sky.”

Exhale “Sky” out from your heart center into the material world.

Repeat this process as you feel walls of separation disappear.

*Land Sky Meditation is an adaptation of Ram Dass’ Soma Meditation technique found on YouTube.

ABOUT BREATHWORK

Although breathwork (pranayama) can be extremely beneficial, please consult a physician and use your best judgment if you have medical concerns or are pregnant. When in doubt, if you feel light-headed, return to your natural breath. Keep breathwork in mind before and after you work with the following spreads.

A CARD A DAY

Shuffle the deck and consider an open-ended question. Pull a card and consider how to incorporate it as a theme into your day. Put this card in a place for reflection throughout your day. Repeat the affirmation during your yoga/meditation practice.

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