

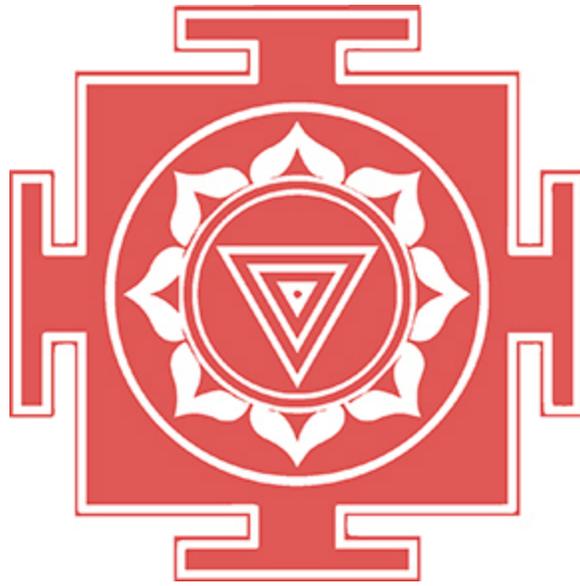
# YONI SHAKTI

A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO POWER AND FREEDOM  
THROUGH YOGA AND TANTRA

REVISED &  
UPDATED EDITION  
INCLUDES  
NEW PREFACE  
'AUTHOR'S  
WARNING'



UMA DINSMORE-TULI PhD  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY NIRLIPTA TULI



# **YONI SHAKTI**

## **A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO POWER AND FREEDOM THROUGH YOGA AND TANTRA**

**A lifetime companion and compendium of  
blood wisdom, womb yoga, sacred sexuality,  
positive health and spiritual empowerment**

by Uma Dinsmore-Tuli, PhD  
Illustrations by Nirlipta Tuli



## **Dedication**

For my daughter Rajakumari Prayaag Eileen Dinsmore-Tuli,  
and for my mother Meryl (Muire) Elizabeth Josephine Dinsmore.

In memory of my grandmothers:  
Eileen Dinsmore (née Waters) (1907–1979) and  
Elizabeth Jessie Moore (née Guy) (1888–1992)

And to all the mothers and daughters who find this work of value,  
I share the sincere hope that through this yoga, all our daughters  
and their future sisters and daughters and granddaughters will live in  
freedom,  
with no need to contend with the challenges and difficulties  
experienced by  
their mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers.

*Jagadambe mātāki jai!*

*Yoni Shakti*

*A Woman's Guide to Power and Freedom through Yoga and Tantra*

*First published in 2014 by YogaWords, this second revised and  
updated edition published 2020*

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*Print edition ISBN 978-1906756-60-4*

*Managing editor: Zoë Blanc*

*Editorial support: Mark Singleton*

*Sanskrit editor: Lucy Crisfield*

*Design concept: Ben Jarlett*

*Jacket design: Spiral Path Design*

*British library cataloguing-in-publication data*

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British library*

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*YogaWords, an imprint of Pinter & Martin Limited*

*6 Effra Parade*

*London SW2 1PS*

*[www.pinterandmartin.com](http://www.pinterandmartin.com)*

*Ṛtaṁ vadiṣyāmi  
Satyaṁ vadiṣyāmi  
[I will speak of what is right,  
I will speak of what is true.]*

**Taittirīya Upaniṣad**

*Sarva maṅgala maṅgalye śive sarvārtha sādḥike  
Śaraṇye tryambake gauri nārāyaṇi namostute  
Sṛṣṭi sthiti vināśānāṃ śakti bhūte sanātani  
Guṇaśraye guṇamaye nārāyaṇi namostute  
[You are the energy of Shiva all auspicious,  
fulfilling all desires.*

*You are the refuge of all, you have three eyes,  
salutations to You, shining radiant Narayani.*

*You are creation, preservation and destruction,  
the eternal living energy.*

*You support the three qualities of nature,  
which are your form, salutations to you, Narayani.]*

***from the Durgā Saptashatī [Devī Māhātmyam]***

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**Acknowledgements**

**Trainings, retreats and learning resources**

**Notes on pronouncing Sanskrit words**

**Sanskrit glossary of terms**

**Select chronology: 50,000 BCE to 2003 CE**

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Commentary and reflections by Nirlipta Tuli, illustrator

# FOREWORD BY ALEXANDRA POPE

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When Uma Dinsmore-Tuli first approached me to write the forward to *Yoni Śakti*, my instant reaction was ‘yes’ even though at that stage I had not read the book. In fact she had barely begun writing. But I knew Uma – her passion, her penetrating intelligence, and the deep tenderness and care in her teaching. I knew this book would be good, and even possibly one that could cause trouble – a trouble that is transformative. That I wanted to support!

My first taste of womb yoga outlined in this book was an hour’s introduction as part of a menstrual health day at which I was also presenting. I raised myself off the floor after that first session to see the face of my colleague at *Women’s Quest*, Sjanie Hugo Wurlitzer, grinning back at me. I knew instantly she was thinking the same thing as me: ‘Wow, this is wonderful, we have to work with this woman.’ And work we did and do, co-running Womb Wisdom Retreats.

What was it that Sjanie and I experienced that day that was so special? A yoga practice in which we felt our bodies and beings had been deeply engaged with rather than imposed on. Our bodies responded with an inner warmth and smile. We had been restored to a resting place of tender intimacy within ourselves, as well as feeling strengthened and balanced physically. And all in one hour. We wanted more.

There is an extraordinary movement, an awakening, occurring worldwide amongst women. It is both a yearning for, and a discovery and articulation of our own ways and practices to approach the sacred, to restore the power of the feminine. Uma Dinsmore-Tuli is one such woman stepping forward, nay compelled forward, by a deep intelligence to show us a yoga practice that is in service of women – physically, emotionally and spiritually. Practices must evolve with the times and with our evolving consciousness. Womb yoga is a fresh articulation of an ancient art that speaks deeply to and nourishes us as women.

For a long time I have argued that many spiritual practices, while worthy and great, can sometimes miss the mark for us as women. I would even dare to say that they were evolved by men to meet the needs and psychology of men, but not women. Women all along had a practice within their own bodies that was going unnoticed except by a few – it was the menstrual cycle. When approached with appropriate consciousness and time, the menstrual cycle can be an inner yoga that initiates a woman into a deep sense of intimacy with herself and the Divine. What is important about this female way is that it practises us. That is, we don't have to 'do' anything, rather, through a deeply felt engagement with the changing rhythms of our cycle, we can potentially enter a spiritual consciousness. Simple though this may sound, it is an inner discipline of a high order. When knowledge of the inner practice of women goes unnamed something immeasurable is lost to women and therefore to the world. It is rare for me to find other practices that understand this with any detail or discipline. However womb yoga explicitly embodies this. While working very thoroughly with all the structural aspects of our pelvis as a core part of our whole being it also engages with the energy dynamic of the cycle itself in both subtle and pragmatic ways that can give a woman a deeper sense of being 'in' herself. Uma also has a way of teaching that connects this deeply felt interior experience to a sense of belonging within mother earth. As one woman described it to me, 'I really love it when Uma gives each woman the opportunity to follow the phase of her menstrual cycle. We have a real sense of being taken care of and truly being ourselves. It's like opening a huge gate connecting my heart with my womb. And it makes me feel part of a great big womb, mother earth.'

Womb yoga speaks to women of all ages and in all stages of life – from menarche, through our budding sexuality, into the journey of pregnancy and birth, to the passage through menopause and beyond. It is for beginners as well as seasoned practitioners and teachers. It's both a revelation and a revolution; healing and nourishing; and restores a deep pleasure to our bodies.

Writing with authority and wisdom cultivated through many years of yoga practice, study and teaching as well as a very full life experience as partner, mother and woman dealing with all the

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