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Sacred Places, Sacred Journeys

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I love to travel. Anyone who knows me will understand what an understatement that is. Not to just travel, but to journey, to arrive at the intersection of place and purpose, that is what enriches my spirit, refreshes my body, stimulates my mind, touches my heart, feeds my soul. So imagine my delight when I learned of Karen Tate's newly released book, Sacred Places of Goddess: 108 Destinations. I immediately asked Karen for a copy to review.

My connection with Karen began many years ago when I was editing *Of a Like Mind* and Karen contributed several fascinating articles on the places she had visited on her Goddess tours. Petra is the one I remember best. It inspired me to plan a trip to Jordan.

Book in hand, before even opening the cover, my first question was "why 108?" Not surprisingly, turns out it's a sacred number. Also thankfully, one that provides opportunity to visit a wide number of places, both better & lesser known, for many hours of emersion in various understandings of goddess around the globe and across time.

As one would expect from Reverend Karen Tate, Mistress of Goddess Spirituality, Priestess of Isis, this is more than a guide book. It offers a look at goddess spirituality as it is unfolding in the world today, It is an encyclopedia of goddess lore. But also practical and pragmatic, we are offered guidelines on how to travel to these places, all of which Karen has visited, on how to stay safe once there, on how to connect with the sacred sites and also respectfully interact with the culture and the peoples surrounding them today.

It is a journey that we start in Europe & Asia Minor: from Palaepaphos on the island of Crete to England, France, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Turkey. Then on to Africa: Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Tunisia. Next to the Middle East: Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Then we journey to the Asian Sub-Continent: India, Pakistan, Nepal. East India follows: Cambodia, China, the Eurasian Steppes, Indonesia, Japan. Next to Oceania: Australia, Hawaii, New Zealand, Tahiti. Then South America & the West Indies: Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Haiti, Trinidad. On to Mexico: mainland

& Yucatan. And finally, ending in Canada & the US.

Sacred Places of Goddess is a deep well of information that will require repeat visits. Pleasurable as it was to read about sites with which I was already familiar, it was in many ways even more exciting to encounter places and cultures of the goddess of which I was previously unaware.

Contributing to making this book such a treasure are its numerous photos & sections entitled “Goddess Focus” (side panels to enrich the sacred site entries, often dispelling myths and explaining concepts and contexts for life in earlier times) & “Gaia Alerts” (notices of ongoing or impending ecological or cultural devastation involving places where women and/or the earth are put at grave risk.) Of the approximately 33 “Goddess Focus” subsections are intriguing offerings on such topics as “The Legacy of Mary Magdelene” in France,, “Sheila-na-Gigs” in Ireland, “Marija Gimbutas” in Turkey, ”Queen of Sheba” in Libya, “Living Life Behind the Veil” in Nepal, “The Shamaness and Anime” in Japan, ”The Putari, Miwi & Sacred Stones” in Australia, “Taino Creatrix Goddess” in Haiti.

The book concludes with a goddess glossary, bibliography, suggested reading list, recommended resources, & list of the author’s favorite museums.

Read the book. If you’re interested in getting closer to the places named, Karen runs a goddess oriented travel company, A Special Journey Travel. Check out her web site: www.karentate.com