

# *Asclepius, Greek God of Healing*

By Robert L. Peck

*Asclepius* (Ἀσκληπίος) is the early allegorical Greek god of healing. The allegorical gods were not considered to have any power within themselves but were able to describe or project the feeling of an inner power, much like a statue or movie. The description could then be used by individuals to find and generate the referenced power within themselves (similar to becoming joyous in the presence of joy). As will be shown, *Asclepius* is an excellent example of an allegorical god.

The name *Asclepius* is in itself a description of the source of the inner healing power, although the understanding of this description has been lost ever since the allegorical gods were taught to be real gods in heaven by their self-appointed priests. The word is a compound formed of two separate words. The first is *askeo* meaning “to work with raw materials,” while the second word, *leptos*, has the meaning of being “refined, threshed or winnowed.” The meaning of the compound word has been lost to the majority of people over the last millennia who do not know about threshing of grain much less about the threshing and winnowing within the body that was once widely known. The physical description of *Asclepius* provided a clue to the ancients since the power of *Asclepius* was depicted as a serpent or snake coiled three times around a stick.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, the explanation for this model is still extant in the Yoga of India where it is known as the inner *Shiva Linga* rising from the base of the body. The Indian model depicts a snake or serpent called *kundalini* coiled three times around an inner stick or *linga*.<sup>2</sup> The rise of the *kundalini* when energized can easily be compared with the rising power of *Asclepius* to heal and strengthen the body and mind. The word *leptos* refers to the purification and activation of the body by threshing, churning or winnowing taking place in the lower region of the body that is mentioned in many Sanskrit writings as well as depicted in surviving Dionysian Greek art work. The Dionysians, for example, carried a *liknon* which was a small winnowing basket the size of the lower body in their parades which often contained a covered *linga*.<sup>3</sup>

The inner threshing and winnowing can be explained by considering the ancient method of purifying grain. The raw grain was crushed against a hard granary floor by a cow or horse walking on the grain while being tied to a central post. The chaff was then removed by winnowing or throwing the threshed grain into a strong air current to carry off the chaff and then catching the purified grain in winnowing baskets. (There is a similar model describing the inner motion as churning like the churning of butter.)

The inner churning and winnowing as done within an individual was with a mental view of the sexual or perineal platform as a granary floor with the downward thrusts of the inner abdominal and sexual muscles as the hooves of the threshing animals while deep exhalations were imagined to blow out the impurities.

The individual would then look for a rising sensation like an awakening serpent followed by the sensation of being filled with a curative and energizing power flowing throughout the body. As one became more in control of the body, the nature of *Asclepius* could be imagined to fill the body with far less effort and also rise quicker during illness or the need for inner strength, wisdom and power. In between times, one might look for the presence of the daughter of *Asclepius*, the allegorical goddess *Hygieia* (from υγιής, meaning “healthy and sound”), to fill the body and mind with the sense of hygienic and healthy living. Both gods could be described as presenting a feeling of a new reality which the body and mind then had to become or take on, similar to the child becoming a ruling queen or king during play.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: the asclepiad snake and rod was the original symbol for *Asclepius*, god of healing, and not the caduceus or two snake and winged rod symbolizing *Hermes*, (god of trading, from ερμηνεύς: “interpreter, messenger” and εἶπω; “to speak”)

<sup>2</sup> *Joy and Evolution*, Chapter 8

<sup>3</sup> *Directing Life*, Chapter 16