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The Sivananda Companion to Yoga by the Sivananda Yoga Center, 192 pages, color plates and illustrations, Simon & Schuster. $9.95

Produced by the students of Swami Vishnu Devananda, this book on yoga embodies his teachings on physical postures, breathing, diet, relaxation and meditation. It is an outstanding artistic accomplishment-from the sketches of asanas, to the elegantly photographed demonstrations of poses, to the selection of ancient paintings illustrating various aspects of yoga. The photos and illustrations neatly complement a concise text, making the book very easy to follow.

The Sivananda Companion to Yoga is in fulfillment of Swami Vishnudevananda's instructions in 1957 from his Guru, Swami Sivananda: "Go, people are waiting. Many souls from the East are reincarnating now in the West. Go and reawaken the consciousness hidden in their memories and bring them back to me path of Yoga."

Beginning with a historical introduction to yoga, the book explains the earliest evidence can be found in the Indus valley. Later the philosophy of Vedanta developed, coming to fruition in the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms and the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. The text rather skillfully avoids making any connection between Yoga/Vedanta and the Hindu religion, although the teachings can hardly be divorced from Hinduism. Philosophically, the book would fall into the Smarta Sampradaya (tradition) of Adi Shankara.

Basic asanas, relaxation methods and breathing are described straight-away, allowing the beginner to easily gel something useful under his belt. A section of more advanced poses comes later, along with advice-and warnings-on accomplishing each. Following this are brief but articulate chapters on diet and meditation. The later chapters have unique sections on specially-adapted hatha

yoga postures for pregnant women, older people and children.

Overall, The Sivananda Companion to Yoga is probably the best book on hatha yoga ever done. Its success lies in its concise use of text to cover each area and the extensive and most excellent illustrations and photos to convey the different subjects. We recommend it to the general reader wholeheartedly.

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