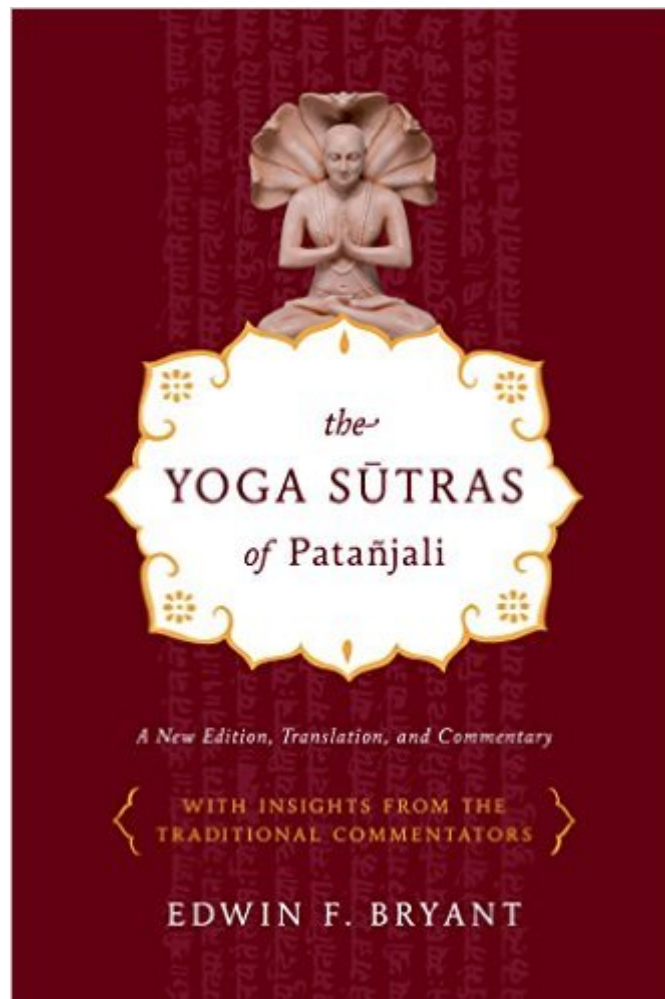


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The Yoga Sutras Of Patañjali: A New Edition, Translation, And Commentary



Synopsis

A landmark new translation and edition Written almost two millennia ago, Patañjali's work focuses on how to attain the direct experience and realization of the purusa: the innermost individual self, or soul. As the classical treatise on the Hindu understanding of mind and consciousness and on the technique of meditation, it has exerted immense influence over the religious practices of Hinduism in India and, more recently, in the West. Edwin F. Bryant's translation is clear, direct, and exact. Each sutra is presented as Sanskrit text, transliteration, and precise English translation, and is followed by Bryant's authoritative commentary, which is grounded in the classical understanding of yoga and conveys the meaning and depth of the su-tras in a user-friendly manner for a Western readership without compromising scholarly rigor or traditional authenticity. In addition, Bryant presents insights drawn from the primary traditional commentaries on the sutras written over the last millennium and a half.

Book Information

Paperback: 672 pages

Publisher: North Point Press; 1 edition (July 21, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0865477361

ISBN-13: 978-0865477360

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (88 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,307 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Hinduism > Sutras #69 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Exercise & Fitness > Yoga #156 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern

Customer Reviews

Edwin F. Bryant presents the sometimes enigmatic aphorisms of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras in clean, clear, sparse, perfectly comprehensible English, and provides the reader with the key thoughts of the major commentators who offer context and interpretation to this seminal Yoga text. An important point to make is that while Bryant's impeccable scholarship satisfies the most demanding academic, these sutras, for the first time, I believe, come to life for the general reader with a sincere interest in Yoga. (The Isherwood-Prabhavananda edition, How to Know God, presents the sayings in lucid, poetic English, but there is none of the depth of commentary.) Bryant presents the individual

sayings ("sutras" literally means "threads") in Sanskrit in both Devanagari script and the Latin alphabet, and translates each word precisely, then offers his own translation of the sutra in contemporary English. The individual sutras are followed by readable narratives which interpret each saying and various commentaries from ancient to modern times. As someone who has practiced Yoga since childhood and has written a master's thesis on the sutras, I recommend this book enthusiastically. Every student and teacher of Yoga, whether as a popular fitness program or the highest pathway to enlightenment, should own this book. Furthermore, individuals with no special interest in Yoga will find that it offers an excellent complement to other philosophical and religious reading, since the Sutras' teachings mirror the pathways of many world religions. I hope it becomes available in hardback and as a Kindle book because it is a work that should become part of one's permanent library and, in fact, part of one's very life.

Serious yoga practitioners need seek no further than this fascinating and inspiring translation and commentary. While not the easiest version of the Yoga Sutras to read, its virtues more than compensate for the difficulty. Prof. Bryant's comprehensive knowledge of Indian philosophy, fidelity to the intent of the text (without the usual filtering to suit various Western prejudices and agendas) and passionate fondness for this material lift this version far above any others. The glossary and index of Sanskrit terms are themselves worth the price. Read this book in small chunks, take your time, and it will amply repay your efforts.

I was able to read the completed manuscript in Prof. Bryant's Yoga Sutras class in 2007 (in the book it says 2008!) and have been waiting ever since for the book to come out. Having no background in philosophy I found Bryant's book to be surprisingly friendly to read, easy to understand, and beyond intellectually stimulating. Many of the ideas and concepts proposed in the Yogic tradition are abstract, and lack English equivalents, which in other cases might prove a daunting and tedious task; but Bryant tackles these ideologies in terms and examples which any one could read and comprehend. If I could afford it I would buy 1,000 copies of this book and hand it out to people.

There's a growing selection of commentaries on the Yoga Sutras but this one stands out as a useful crossover between more scholarly texts and those aimed at more 'everyday' students. Edwin Bryant has chosen a selection of classical commentaries to reference in his own commentary, including Vyasa and Vijñānabhikṣu, making this an invaluable 'one stop shop' for reference. In addition to the

commentary on the Yoga Sutras, this book includes a useful history of yoga, placing it in context with the Vedic Period, Upanisads, Mahabharata and Sanhkya. Also included is an explanation of the subject matter of the Yoga Sutras and in the Appendix, a transliteration and translation of the Yoga Sutras. Apart from the overall quality of this text, what you get represents real value for money! Although I've only recently received my copy, I can see that this book is likely to become my 'go to' for the Yoga Sutras. However, it's less likely to become the copy that I take to the Yoga Sutra group I go to but only because the sometimes extensive commentary on individual sutras makes it too unwieldy for reference in the class situation. In my opinion, this is a book to savour when you have time to sit with it, absorb and contemplate the commentary properly. In summary, Edwin Bryant's commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali should be on the bookshelf of any serious yoga student.

I attended a seminar on the Sutras given by Edwin a couple of years ago and have been waiting for this book to be published ever since. He is truly one of the great minds of our time. Edwin "unpacks" the sutras, revealing their wisdom layer by layer in an understandable format. This rendition is every bit what I thought it would be and I would recommend it to yogis and yoginis everywhere. The commentary is in depth and explains even the most abstract (and sometimes seemingly contradictory) concepts of the Sutras well.

I have been looking forward to adding Edwin Bryant's translation and commentary on the yoga sutras to my collection, but I not expecting to be so blown away. He has created a very clear, deeply historical, profoundly personal, wonderfully moving translation and commentary on the yoga sutras. You should not be without this book.

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