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Books

Tara Katir, Washington

The Vedic Wedding - Understanding what it all means, step by step

The ritual of circumambulating the sacred fire binds a Hindu couple together in a tradition that has been followed in India for thousands of years. To sustain these customs outside India is Dr. A.V. Srinivasan's stated intention in his new book, *The Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition and Practice* (Periplus Line LLC, 268 pages). Srinivasan explains, "The inspiration came from the young Indians in the United States who sought my advice in the past three decades and asked me to officiate at their weddings. I have been impressed by their genuine interest in understanding Vedic wedding practices and philosophy."

Srinivasan's book is a solution for contemporary Hindu couples in the West who wish to fully comprehend their marriage ceremony. Chapters on the Hindu philosophy of marriage, the origins of the ceremony in the Vedas, Shastras, Grihya Sutras and popular traditions and customs, provide good preparation for understanding the ritualistic ceremony, which is covered in chapter four. In addition, readers will find detailed instructions for required accoutrements, music selection, rehearsal, bridal attire and cosmetics, special pujas done by the bride and groom and a bevy of additional ceremonies one may choose to include. There is even a practical section on homa fire safety. The book is well researched and a welcome help.

The Vedic Wedding, origins, tradition and practice by A.V. Srinivasan, Periplus Line LLC, P.O. Box 56, East Glastonbury, CT 06025-0056, 2006. 268 pages.

Hindu Posters

To give an accurate portrayal of the rich Hindu cultural heritage, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA created a popular exhibition presenting Hindu dharma and culture through a series of 30 posters (example at right), which have now been compiled into Hindu Culture and Dharmic Traditions from India. The posters illustrate the firm roots of our ancient dharma in the archeological past and show how Hinduism's lofty cosmological laws are finding themselves accepted by some modern astronomers and physicists. Hindu dharma, way of living and temple worship, the exhibition points out, have found a welcoming home in America after influencing Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and various Caribbean countries over the centuries. Yoga and ayurveda, once the privied province of ancient Hindu India, are now the rage throughout the West. Teachers and parents should bring this book to the attention of school curriculum directors. It is a creative teaching tool to help counter the misinformation published in textbooks regarding Indian religious practices and history.

Hindu Culture and Dharmic Traditions from India, publisher HSS, USA, 121 Hawthorne Court, Rockaway, NJ 07866 (30 pages) \$15. <http://www.hssus.org>

Hanuman Twice

Uneel Gomber, devotee of Lord Hanuman and founder of J. B. Charitable Trust, has compiled two lovely books on Lord Hanuman: The World of Lord Hanuman and The Visual Encyclopedia of Lord Hanuman (J.B. Charitable Trust, 188 and 247 pages respectively). For The World of Lord Hanuman, Gomber collected material from 51 websites devoted to Hanuman and compiled it into 31 articles. Gomber states, "These sites, which are maintained by highly learned international scholars, provide a wonderful insight into the references on Lord Hanuman drawn from various sacred and religious scripture. By the grace of Hanumanji, I have been able to compile the storehouse of information and knowledge of these websites into a collection of articles in this book." The result is a marvelous volume that guides readers through the long and complicated details of Lord Hanuman's life and relationship with Lord Rama.

In 2004, Suneel Gomber established the Museum of Hanumat Sangrahalaya, "a vast collection of rare books, paintings, Deities and murals depicting Lord Hanuman in various divine forms." The Visual Encyclopedia of Lord Hanuman is a 247-page compilation of the many sketches, paintings and photographs belonging to the Hanuman Museum. The art is presented in brilliant full color whenever possible; a caption under each picture details its origin. Whether you are a devotee of Lord Hanuman or just love the Ramayana and Indian art, these two books are great additions to your personal library.

The world of Lord Hanuman by Suneel Gomber and Prashant Gupta, 188 pages, rs 350. The Visual Encyclopedia of Lord Hanuman, Suneel Gomber, english text by Dr. N.S.R. Sastry, Hindi translation by Dr. Yogesh Praveen, 247 pages, RS 695. both published by J.B. Charitable Trust (regd.), 14/1192, Indira Nagar, Lucknow 226 016, U.P., India.

Hinduism For Children

Vivekananda Centre London has published a new book by Seeta Lakhani, Primary Hinduism, as part of a series of textbooks (including Hinduism for Schools for older children) designed to ensure that Hinduism taught in the West is "both comprehensive and comprehensible."

Utilizing appealing narratives and colorful images to make Hinduism interesting and exciting for the very young, this new book is designed for use by 6- to 13-year olds ("key stages " 1 to 3 in the UK school system). In simple language and informative illustrations, it presents easy-to-understand explanations of Hindu beliefs and practices.

A companion website, <http://www.hinduism.fsnet.co.uk> offers supporting resources for the books.

Hinduism for Schools by Seeta Lakhani, publisher Vivekananda Centre London, 6

Lea Gardens, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7S3, 133 pages, Â£12. for UK and international order from <http://www.vivekananda.co.uk> in USA, <http://www.minimela.com>