

[HINDU BOOK REVIEW](#)

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Published by Anonymous on Nov. 02, 1988

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Kailash Journal

Author: Swami Satchidananda

161 pgs integral Yoga Publications \$6.95

Yogaville, Route 1, Box 172

Buckingham, VA 23921 U.S.A.

"As the afternoon wore on, the river passed far behind us and my legs started to ache with fatigue. Soon they were begging me to let them rest. When a free mule came by, I mounted it. A heavy rain suddenly started to fall, and I opened my umbrella. The mule was walking slowly beneath some trees. When I closed the umbrella to duck under a low branch, the animal became alarmed and jumped ahead. I fell down on a rock and called out 'Hari Om.' My breathing stopped and I could feel the life rapidly departing from my body. I knew that I faced death..."

So wrote Swami Satchidananda - a man with nine lives - in the 1958 diary he kept of his arduous sixty-foot pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash, a 22,000-foot lingam-like peak of flecked granite and marble snow that is the ultimate Hindu geology. The swami, lying crumpled and bleeding on the rocks on his way down from Kailash, willed himself to breathe. He survived, his great woolly beard none the worse. Within a decade this spirited soul would found the successful Integral Yoga Institute in

America.

Actually, Swamiji went toe to toe with death twice on his odyssey of muscle, lungs and yoga, testimony to the fact that the Kailash pilgrimage is the world's most challenging journey to a sacred site. Yet, in the inverse ratio of spiritual effort, Kailash is also Earth's most rewarding locale for consciousness transformation. The Tibetan Buddhists have built four monasteries around the peak.

Swamiji's diary is a quick, homely, elevating record of life on the Kailash trail. It is like a home movie - the writing wobbles out of scanty scene description into the comic antics of the mules and mulepackers into the swami's ingenuous attempts to tell us how the pilgrimage is affecting him mystically. This is not a grippingly told adventure story, nor a vividly written spiritual odyssey. It is a charming and rare record of high - 19,000 feet literally - pilgrimage and is packed full of facts, conversation with interesting mountain folk, insight and lore. The book includes a large number of the swami's own pilgrimage photos.

Hatha Yoga: The Hidden Language

Author Swami Sivananda Radha

310 pgs Timeless Books hc\$19.95

Hatha yoga as originally formulated by the Saivite Nathas (Lords of Yoga), catalyzes a balancing of the ida and pingala psychic currents so that kundalini is properly activated and controlled. In "The Hidden Language" Swami Radha, a very thoughtful, Progressive sannyasini, hauls out her psycho-shovel and turns over new ground in hatha yoga exploration. This system is used at her Canada ashram.

Her approach in this book is entirely psychological - analyze each basic and advanced asana in terms of the name and zoological or structural form it is copied from: mountain, cobra, turtle, bow etc. Swamima probes the asana as a symbol of

subconscious and superconscious personality tendencies. She brings in a number of associative symbols and metaphors from Hindu, Egyptian, Roman, Asian, etc., cultures and invites the student to delve into the psychological state the asana is communicating to them. For instance, the mountain pose "is space to stand on, space above, space all around; where do I stand on important principles, ideals, ethics, decisions, beliefs, conviction? Do I stand on my own two feet?" The result is supposed to be liberation from a mere physical experience of the asana which, as Swami Radha rightly contends, is the modern, corrupted approach to hatha yoga. Her technique takes the student from physical to mental. Where is the supra-mental experience? The book is executed and designed extremely well.

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