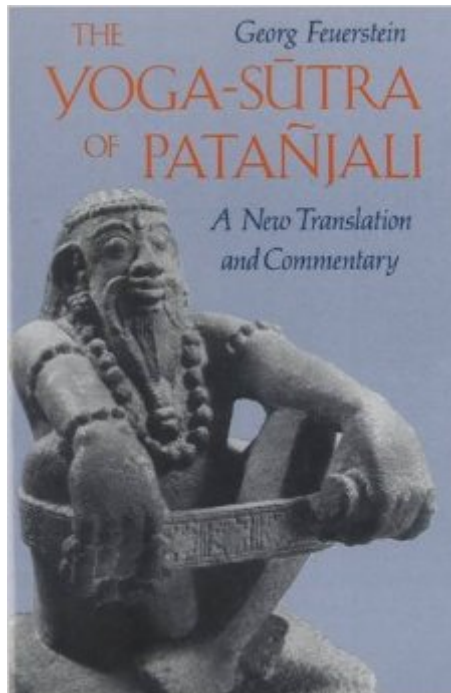


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The Yoga-Sutra Of Patañjali: A New Translation And Commentary



Synopsis

Approximately two thousand years old, The Yoga-Sutra of Patañjali is the landmark scripture on classical yoga. The translation and commentary provided here by Georg Feuerstein are outstanding for their accessibility and their insight into the essential meaning of this ancient and complex text. A scholar of international renown who has studied and practiced yoga since the age of fourteen, Feuerstein also brings to The Yoga-Sutra of Patañjali his experience as a professional indologist. His faithful and informed rendering of the aphorisms (sutras) is based on extensive personal research into the Sanskrit sources. Each word is explained so that the entire text becomes readily available to the western reader and student of yoga.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of Feuerstein's earliest works, written in the late seventies when he was around thirty years old. It is a young scholar's book, marked by impatience with the scholarly establishment's misconceptions and errors, and filled with enthusiasm for setting the old guys aright. It is vigorously pedantic and refreshingly candid. Inspired by the great Romanian scholar Mircea Eliade, who, in his monumental *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (1958) (see my review at), set the standard for all scholarly works on yoga, Feuerstein translates the most important Sanskrit word in Patanjali's scheme, "samadhi" as "enstasy," eschewing the usual and inadequate "ecstasy." Enstasy was Eliade's coinage. Both he and Feuerstein were understandably dissatisfied with "ecstasy" since it does not adequately convey the complex meaning of samadhi. Unfortunately neither does enstasy, and worse yet, the word is practically unknown in English. Webster's Unabridged Second

International Dictionary, which was the standard at the time, doesn't even list it. The solution of course is to avoid any attempt at a direct word-for-word translation of "samadhi" and instead allow the context to define it. That is the usual practice today. I make this point because I think it illustrates the kind of mistake that Feuerstein, who has gone on to become perhaps the world's leading academic authority on yoga, would not make today. Indeed in his *The Shambhala Encyclopedia of Yoga* (1997), relying upon a number of different yogic traditions, Feuerstein defines "samadhi" using various modifications and qualifications of "ecstasy" and does not employ the word "enstasy" at all.

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