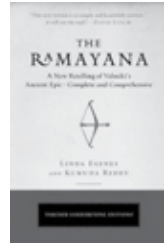


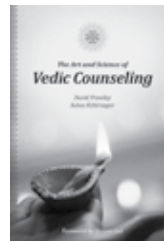
Reviews

Books



THE RAMAYANA: A New Retelling of Valmiki's Ancient Epic—Complete and Comprehensive by Linda Egenes and Kumuda Reddy; Paperback, 5.5x8.25, 400 pp, \$18.00; Tarcher Cornerstone Editions 2016, penguinrandomhouse.com.

ONE OF THE world's greatest epics, the Ramayana tells a grand tale and is also among our major sources of spiritual truth and inspiration. With its many great characters and teachings, it is presented here in fifty-two chapters and an epilogue. Brief passages in Sanskrit with English translations are included, as well as a glossary. Originally written thousands of years ago in Sanskrit by Sage Valmiki, the Ramayana has appeared in numerous variations and languages in India, Nepal, and throughout Southeast Asia. In brief, it tells the story of Prince Rama, an incarnation of God whose principal mission was to save earth and heaven from unbearable miseries caused by the demon Ravana. Rama stands to this day as the example and defender of *dharma*, (truth, righteousness, justice). If you have not yet read the Ramayana, here is an entry into a remarkable adventure in reading and upliftment. Linda Egenes is a teacher of writing at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa; Kumuda Reddy is a medical doctor with training in Maharishi Ayurveda.



THE ART AND SCIENCE OF VEDIC COUNSELING by David Frawley and Suhas Kshirsagar; Paperback, 6x9, 332 pp, \$19.95; Lotus Press 2016, lotuspress.com.

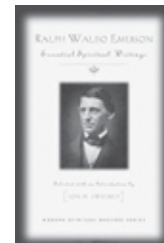
DAVID FRAWLEY IS a Vedic scholar and widely published author, while Suhas Kshirsagar is a classically trained Ayurvedic physician. Together they have created an outstanding sourcebook and guide for the counseling profession, as well as those interested in spiritual living and practices. As they put it, "Vedic knowledge leads us to a quantum leap in awareness, a revolution in higher consciousness and a greater integration with the universe." It is this knowledge upon which Vedic counseling is based—augmented by millennia of investigation and practical application by sages, yogis, Ayurvedic healers and Vedic astrologers. The book includes a wide array of topics, for example: karma, *prana* (vital energy), care of health, the chakras, meditation, spiritual therapies, and principles of right living. Abundant information and in-depth guidance are offered in two spheres. One is health, healing, psychological well-being and spiritual unfoldment;

the other, the art and science of counseling. Counselors and spiritual seekers alike will find a treasury of practical information and advice in this groundbreaking book.



SELF-ABANDONMENT TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE by Fr. J. P. de Caussade, S.J.; Paperback, 5.5x8.5, \$28.95; Tan Books, 2012, tanbooks.com.

THE AUTHOR OF this spiritual classic was ordained as a Jesuit priest in Toulouse in 1705. In the tradition of St. John of the Cross and St. Therese of Lisieux, his way was that of complete inner surrender to God in every moment and every contingency, no matter how dire or irksome. In the language of his day and his theology, he teaches a way of peace based on deep faith, trust and openhearted love of God. In addition to de Caussade's treatise on self-abandonment, this edition contains his letters, preserved by a group of nuns of the Order of the Visitation. The letters offer glimpses of these spirited and devout women, as well as the mystical teachings, encouragement and direction they received from de Caussade. The book is a source of inspiration as well as comfort during hard times for all seekers of God. The translation is excellent.



RALPH WALDO EMERSON, Essential Spiritual Writings, selected and edited by Jon M. Sweeney; Paperback, 8.25x5.25, 153 pp, \$22.00, Orbis Books 2016, orbisbooks.com.

THIS NEW ADDITION to Orbis Books' Modern Spiritual Masters Series is worthy of reading and re-reading. Selections are drawn from Emerson's famous essays including: "The Over-Soul," "Nature," and "Self-Reliance," as well as his sermons, lectures, poems and translations of Hafiz. This edition stresses Emerson's importance to "American spirituality and religious life." Readers will find quotable sentences on every page and be inspired by Emerson's inspiration, eloquence, boldness and joy. The Bhagavad Gita and other Indian scriptures, as well as Sufism and Hafiz, pervaded his life and combined with his own insights, musings and mystical experiences. He was the first in this country to publicly embrace Eastern spirituality.

Emerson was enormously influential in the 19th century as leader of the Transcendentalist movement. In a New England emerging from the pall of Puritanism and Calvinism, he wrote: "The stern old faiths have all pulverized." His ideas, influenced by Indian spirituality, include the Divinity of each individual soul, Divinity pervading all, Oneness of all men, trusting the intuition of your own heart and soul, and Divinity in nature. His thoughts spread throughout New England, influenced the rest of the country, and crossed the sea to Europe. The current issue of an environmental magazine features a quote by Emerson on its back cover: "The greatest wonder is that we can see these trees and not wonder more." His thought is still relevant today.

Noteworthy

IDIOT'S GUIDES: Meditation by Domyo Sater Burk—For anyone you may know who is interested in learning about meditation, here is a primer with abundant information, instructions and encouragement. It also presents meditation in various traditions, from Yoga, Zen and Jewish to Christian, Sufi and Native American, plus Mindfulness and other techniques. Inserts are included with definitions, tips, cautions and clarifications, as well as a glossary and eight pages of resources. (Paperback, 318 pp, \$19.95; Alpha 2016, idiotsguides.com).

BUDDHA DOODLES: Imagine the Possibilities by Molly Hahn—Each page of this small book contains a charming illustration of little monks and other people, often with a purple elephant. Along with these are short pithy sayings. Some are quite profound—"We are deeply interconnected"—yet all communicate a joyfulness that is loving, inspiring and uplifting. "Lean toward the light," for example, or "We're all just walking each other home," or simply "Rest." As a daily reminder or pick-me-up, or as a loving gift, this book will make someone smile. (Hardbound, 96 pp, \$12.99; Andrews McMeel Publishing 2016, andrewsmcmeel.com)

Children & Young Adults



GANDHI FOR KIDS: His Life and Ideas by Ellen Mahoney; Paperback, 8.5x11, 134 pp, \$17.99; Chicago Review Press 2016, chicagoreviewpress.com.

ENGROSSING TEXT and abundant archival photographs combine in this presentation of the life of Mahatma Gandhi and his heroic work for nonviolence, peace and freedom in our world. Gandhi's personal striving for truth, as well as his history-making efforts on behalf of his country and people, provide vital lessons for all of us. Twenty-one activities are included, from making a *diya* (Indian candleholder), spinning thread from a cotton ball, and speaking up for a cause, to designing a one-day vegetarian menu, writing a poem, and organizing a film festival. *Gandhi for Kids* is a valuable and important book for today's young people ages nine and up.



WHITE BUTTERFLY AND HER WINGS OF MANY COLORS written and illustrated by Susan Andra Lion; Hardcover, 9x11, 32 pp, \$18.95; Mariposa Blanca Publishing 2015, satiamo.com.

FROM A STORY written by Arnold Bustillo comes a charming tale, delightfully illustrated, about courage and awakening.

White Butterfly is happy to help save the Garden of Roses but is conflicted by her own wishes. Along the way she learns about vanity and the virtues of humility and gratitude. After a harrowing experience of captivity, she is rescued and finally understands the true meaning of beauty.



SITA: Daughter of the Earth by Saraswati Nagpal, illustrated by Manikandan, **SUNDARKAAND: Triumph of Hanuman**, adapted by Shyam Prakash, illustrated by Sachin Nagar; Paperback 6.5x10, 76-96 pp, \$9.99-12.99; Campfire Mythology 2011-2013, campfire.co.in.

GRAPHIC NOVELS HAVE taken a quantum leap in a new generation of epics from India. *Sita: Daughter of the Earth* and *Sundarkaand: Triumph of Hanuman* are part of an exciting series of books for young adults portraying classic stories and inspiring biographies from east and west. The art in these novels is truly outstanding as is the storytelling. Sita narrates her own story from birth to wedded bliss with Sri Rama, then her capture by the evil demon Ravana and rescue by her Lord. *Sundarkaand* gives the backstory of Rama's banishment then proceeds with Hanuman's heroic tale, including his flight across the sea in search of Sita, and his devotion to Sri Rama. Hanuman's book also includes a foldout poster. There are many unusual details in both books in the retelling of the Ramayana, and the intricate images and dialogues will keep mature children through young adults mesmerized. Highly recommended.

Video



THE MESSENGER A Documentary by Su Rynard, by Kino Lorber 2016, 90 min, Blu-ray \$31/DVD \$20, MessengerFilm.com.

HOW OFTEN CAN you say if you flip a switch, a problem disappears? If you turn off lights, you're going to be saving birds' lives.

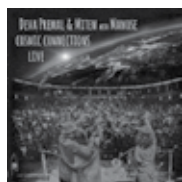
—Michael Measure, Founder of Fatal Life

Awareness Project

Songbirds, which have been with us since the beginning, are vanishing at an alarming rate. *The Messenger* analyzes the various reasons why—and what we can do to help save our feathered friends. Birds become disoriented by bright lights in large cities and die in vast quantities. They do not recognize glass, only a reflection of the environment they are in or a clear passage to a place beyond the glass. It is now illegal in Canada to knowingly kill birds as a result of light reflecting off your building. Treated glass with markers or dots has reduced bird collisions by 80%. Cat predation is another reason songbirds are disappearing. A study at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center estimated that 1.4

billion birds are killed by cats in the US, Canada and Europe each year. Humans also eat songbirds; they are a delicacy in Europe. Using satellites and databases for global tracking, scientists and amateurs are collaborating around the world to observe and protect songbirds and their habitats. Climate change could be the most significant factor in the survival of songbirds: we are changing the environment faster than birds can adapt. Filmed in the US, Canada, Germany, France, Costa Rica, Turkey and the Netherlands, *The Messenger* is a sobering reminder that songbirds, like the canary in a coal mine, may once again be carrying a message to humanity—one that we ignore at our own peril.

Audio



COSMIC CONNECTIONS LIVE by Deva Premal & Miten with Manose, 60 min, 2016; CD \$17/MP3 \$9, WhiteSwanMusic.com.

THE DEVOTIONAL music of Deva Premal, Miten and Manose is always a soul-delight, especially their concert albums. *Cosmic Connections Live* includes mantras, chants and lyrical songs recorded in Hungary, the Netherlands, Canada, UK and Germany, plus a bonus studio track. Deva Premal's intoning of *OM Sahana Vavatu Mantra* is truly sublime, followed by Mangalam, a chant to Vishnu, her voice echoed in sweet flute tones by Manose. On the popular Indian song, *Rang De*, she sings, "Color me in your color, great Mother." Miten sings two heartfelt songs in English: *White Cloud* and *Native Son*, reminiscent of 70's folk songs. "For me there is nothing more precious," comments Deva Premal, "than having sung with an audience, ecstatic with bliss, and then entering the inner world of deep peace that the mantras offer... all personalities dissolved for an endless sacred moment into Eternity – only joy remaining..." An album to create peace, harmony and deep solace in our troubled world.



HEALING THE CHAKRAS & DOLPHIN DREAMS by John Grout/DJ Zen, 60 min, 2001 & 2015; CDs \$16/MP3 \$8 on iTunes, ZenergyMusic.com.

CANADIAN ARTIST, John Grout/DJ Zen shares his global fusion music in two unique albums. In *Healing the Chakras* he explains that each chakra or energy center vibrates at specific frequencies, and he uses musical keynotes to unlock them. With seven tracks for the seven chakras, and an eighth for Protection, each leads you progressively within. This instrumental music includes mellow keyboards, guitar, synths, Native American flutes by Chief Joseph, shaman chants by Don Mateo, crystal bowls by Angela O, as well as piano, ocarina, bass and percussions. Both energizing

and relaxing, this music is perfect for healing therapies, contemplation and creativity.

Also creator of a 40-album series called *Naturescapes*, Grout captures the soothing sounds of an underwater world in *Dolphin Dreams*. The tranquil world of the dolphin is conveyed through peaceful melodies, angelic vocals and gentle hypnotic rhythms, taking you on a journey into deeper levels of relaxation, peace and stillness.



HAWAII HEALING/ MAULOLO, HANA/ EMBRACED BY THE SEA & SPIRITS OF FOREST by Marth, **A SOUL BREAK** by Norm Freeman & Katherine

Cash, 47-64 min, 2011-2014; CDs \$20/MP3 \$10, Hawaii-H.com.

MARTH HAS RECORDED more than one hundred albums over the last thirty years, and has composed and produced for healing artists including Daniel Kobialka. His music is exquisitely soothing, calming and gentle as a Hawaiian sunrise. Each series is played in a different music ensemble: *Hana/Embraced by the Sea* is string orchestra and guitar; *Hawaii/ Mauloa Healing* is harp and strings; *Spirits of the Forest/Mother Earth* is synthetic harp, synthesizer and piano.

Most remarkable in this series is *A Soul Break*, a transcendent album by the Julliard-trained duo, Norm Freeman on vibraphone and Katherine Cash on violin, with music composed by Marth. He writes: "I feel that genuine healing for mankind occurs through a particular Truth. The truth of science is that this world is unknown and inexplicable, like a dream. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than if this album invites listeners to the unknown." This angelic music speaks the pure language of the heart—highly recommended!



WINDS OF TIME by David Churchill, 60 min, 2007; CD \$10 DavidChurchillOnline.com.

WE WERE INTRODUCED to David's music at the recent International New Age Trade Show in Denver. Gently soothing, lush melodies were pouring out as he quietly sat and played an electric piano in an informal setting. Over the hours we realized that he is a very gifted artist, blessed to play from the heart and offer healing vibrations for those around him. David has played music since the age of seven and began composing New Age music before he knew the genre existed. His repertoire also includes Easy Listening, Jazz, Blues and original Classical music. He performs at venues throughout Denver and has won numerous awards. His album, *Winds of Time*, recorded on a Yamaha Grand Piano and Roland keyboard, includes eleven of his compositions capturing the feeling of Colorado's wide open spaces, of timelessness, peace and tranquility. A beautiful offering from a humble and talented soul.