

# Dynamic Stillness Part II: The Fullfillment of Trika Yoga

By Swami Chetanananda

Reviewed by Sarah Fahey

*Dynamic Stillness Part Two: The Fulfillment of Trika Yoga* completes Swami Chetanananda's exposition introducing the ancient Tantric system of *Trika Yoga* to the West.

**T**rika Yoga's core philosophy revolves around the premise that we are not separate from the Divine; we are in fact one with the Divine source that created the entire universe. The author describes this creative source as a "dynamic stillness" that we can touch, come to understand as abiding within ourselves and, through practice, come back to again and again, thereby transforming every aspect of our daily life into a flow of pure consciousness. Swami Chetanananda translates this living tradition of the ancient masters of *Kashmir Shaivism* into a Western idiom that is alive and relevant today. The result is a practitioner's manual of authentic spiritual life and a resource for anyone who has ever asked the question, "Who am I?"

In his first book on the *Trika* system entitled *Part One: The Practice of Trika Yoga*, the author gave us an overview of the tradition and its stages of practice as he addressed questions pertinent to the beginning student. In this second volume, Chetanananda continues his earlier work by going on to explore the philosophical implications of the refined states of awareness we experience when our consciousness extends beyond its usual day-to-day limitations. This requires shifts in awareness that occur during three stages of practice: *anavopaya*, the stage of individual effort; *shaktopaya*, the stage of the energy; and *shambhavopaya*, the stage of the Self.

As careful observers of human nature the ancient *Trika* masters found that early conditioning and egoic involvement veil our true nature and are the cause of our sense of alienation, resulting in tension, suffering, and bondage. In order to experience a release from the tensions that bind us and enable us to realize a flow of spontaneity, creativity, and freedom, *Trika* emphasizes three methods. The first and most important is direct contact and work with a teacher who transmits to the student an experience of this inner Presence on an immediate, visceral level. The second method is private meditation and study, both of which help still the mind and reinforce the connection to

this dynamic energy, or the Inner Self. The third method involves learning to extend the flow of our creative energy by serving the people and situations that make up our field of existence.

Every chapter of this second volume is filled with information, tools and in-depth discussions of the many transitions which students encounter during the course of their spiritual practice. Chetanananda gives a candid, uncomplicated explanation of the classic role of the teacher as catalyst, mentor, and support, recounting moving and humorous anecdotes about his early days with his own teacher, Rudi (Swami Rudrananda). He observes, however, that the teacher is like a well and ultimately it is the student's responsibility to take the nourishment and grow from it.

The author touches on sound, mantra, breath and even wave theory as he describes the energy of Life in terms of a pulsation. His discussion of the strategy and nature of this energy in its dynamic aspect (*spanda*) is thought-provoking and resonant with many of the insights of modern science. Through practice, the student's awareness and trust in this energy source is reinforced as this inner source breaks down tensions, purifies, and continuously uplifts the student's state of being.

Particularly interesting is Chetanananda's discussion of surrender. Here he offers a new perspective on its meaning and reality, and dispels many common notions and fears associated with the term. He states that surrender is not to anyone or anything. Instead, it is the surrender of our own mindsets about ourselves – whether positive or negative – our judgments of others, and our limited view of life. By letting go of tensions and patterns that no longer serve growth, we are able to experience the full potential available to us at every moment. The author emphasizes

the importance of cultivating one's capacity to surrender by having a sincere and deep inner wish to grow. This active commitment to our own growth enables us to become "authentic human beings."

Trika is a living practice based on the experience of many masters. Swami Chetanananda shares his twenty years of experience along with ample insights and references from classical sources. *Dynamic Stillness* brings this practice to life and is an important addition to the new American Spirituality.