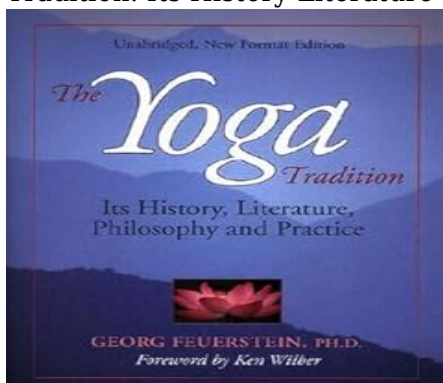


The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice By Georg Feuerstein After doing his postgraduate research at Durham University in England he moved to the United States eventually settling in Canada with his wife and sometime co author {site_link} Brenda. After doing his postgraduate research at Durham University in England he moved to the United States eventually settling in Canada with his wife and sometime co author {site_link} Brenda. This illustrated and well-presented 680-page book with a foreword by Ken Wilber is a comprehensive overview of the philosophy and practice of the Yoga tradition covering Hindu and Buddhist Yoga as well as Yoga in Jainism and Sikhism. There is an overview of the Yoga of the Upanishads with special references to specific Upanishads a synthesis and excerpts from the Yoga Vashishtha and a section devoted to Tantra-Yoga. This book is a fine balance between a layman's introduction to the subject a practitioner's guide to the various aspects of yoga and an academic enquiry into the history philosophy and literature of Yoga. pg 27 From these ancient beginnings author Georg Feuerstein takes readers on a fantastical and spiritual journey through the various branches of yoga including Raja Hatha Bhakti Jnana and more. Long before the word yoga acquired its customary meaning of 'spirituality' or 'spiritual discipline' the sages of India had developed a body of knowledge and techniques that aimed at the transformation and transcendence of ordinary consciousness. pg 65 Beyond sharing the history philosophy and practice of yoga Feuerstein encourages modern scientists to look closely at the traditions in these pages to see what benefits could be gained from the ancient knowledge. Gradually modern medicine and psychology aided by advanced scientific concepts methods and instrumentation are rediscovering some of the amazing facts that yogins have talked about and demonstrated for centuries. pg 400 In my mind that is one of the most exciting aspects of this book- what humanity could possibly learn about the enduring mystery of consciousness itself through the application of modern methods of study to ancient techniques. There is no easy way to review this book so I'm going to simply flip open the contents and talk here and there about pieces that particularly intrigued puzzled offended or delighted me.) I think the other thing that comes to light from reading these opening pages (this includes the introduction proper) is that Feuerstein is definitely a believer and to an extent that is probably not kosher in scholarly circles writes as one too. To give you an idea the most important Indian of them all the Buddha was for a long time considered to have lived from 563-483 BC but recently has been relocated to something more like 490-410. What is clear is that yoga has definitely progressed through stages of development beginning with earlier shamanic practices focusing on tapas (austerities) magic and visions and this eventually gave way to the more self-transcending orientation of the Upanishads and later texts. Chapters six and seven generously treat of yoga's place in the heterodox traditions of Jainism and Buddhism though readers particularly interested in these fields should consult the extensive bibliography at the back of the book if they wish to follow further these lines of inquiry. Though Mahavira the religion's founder gets a bad rap in the early Buddhist texts my suspicion has always been that he was certainly an extraordinary man in some ways perhaps the equal of the Buddha. (I have just finished up Feuerstein's translation of this seminal text and let me tell you it is a doozy!) Again there are generous passages from important texts included here; you can certainly get a sense for what this kind of literature is like. Patanjali's) and even include a complete translation of the Yoga Sutras! The historical and intellectual place of this little book within the edifice of yoga is made clear-it has proven more an inspiration to practice than to philosophy. The immense service it provides is to give the reader a morsel a taste of so many of the exquisite delights of the yogic tradition that he (or she) may then meaningfully pursue further any of them as he pleases. Hence when the unconscious conditioning by which we experience ourselves as independent isolated egos is removed we realize that at the core of our being we are all that same One. As the modern yogin-philosopher Sri Aurobindo put it: 'We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form unless we accept the Vedantic¹ solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life Life a

form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case the unconquerable impulse of man towards God Light Bliss Freedom Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind and appears to be as natural true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life ... Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman the god. We decide to type into a computer play the piano ride a bicycle or speak to a friend-but these activities according to Krishna (and the spiritual authorities of Hinduism in general) are not effects of the ego-personality in relation to which they seem to be occurring. In fact the ego-sense itself arises as one of the spontaneous activities of Nature presuming itself to be the actor of certain deeds and then presuming itself to suffer their consequences. 2) This passage epitomizes the essence of the Upanishadic mystery teachings which were passed from Self-realized teacher to disciple by word of mouth: The transcendental ground of the world is identical with the ultimate core of the human being. ""The Hînayâna tradition which survives today in the form of the Theravâda school of Sri Lankâ was individual oriented in so far as it placed the goal of the complete extinction (nirvâna) of desire above everything else. In keeping with this reorientation nirvâna was no longer conceived as a goal 'out there' but as the ever-present substratum underlying phenomenal existence: The famous Mahâyâna formula is nirvâna equals samsâra that is the immutable transcendental Reality is identical with the world of impermanence and vice versa. 6 Our very cells are genetically programmed to perpetuate the biological conglomerate that we call "our" body-mind: We desire to be alive as individuals and yet our very individuality is the factor that complicates our existence because we separate ourselves from everything else and then look for ways to reduce or overcome the resulting sense of isolation and fear. They are considered to be "left-hand" schools because they champion the literal enactment of the ultimate truth of nonduality while the "right-hand" schools by and large condone only the symbolic expression of that truth. While the adherents of the right-hand schools generally see sexuality as a threat to spiritual growth the followers of the left-hand path within Shaivism employ sexuality for their spiritual transformation. The Sanskrit term vâma-âcâra ("left conduct" written vâmâcâra) has negative connotations in conventional contexts but it is used by the left-hand schools themselves though not because they admit to being partial to evil. The reason for this eccentric approach is partly to reclaim the repressed aspects of human existence and partly to demonstrate that life can and should be lived under all circumstances from the point of view of the ultimate truth of nonduality: If there is only the singular all-comprising Being then to put it bluntly it must also be the essence of genitals death and garbage. ""Yoga is understood as a gradual ascent to the transcendental Source which involves the progressive penetration of the various layers of illusion that are created by the mâyâ principle. ""Perhaps the most extraordinary teaching of the Bhâgavata-Purâna is the "Yoga of hatred" (dvesha- yoga) according to which a person who thoroughly hates the Divine can achieve God-Realization as readily as one who deeply loves the Lord. When I first got this book I was beyond thrilled but as I started reading more and more countless times my thoughts did not match up with the definition of a word or term such as Creativity is absolute. I've since learned that what was holding me back from appreciating the book was that I was looking at these words or terms through the western idea or definition so I could never understand the authors intentions. It goes way beyond asanas (which I don't think are even mentioned in the book once - which is another reason to watch the movie first so that you can understand where the asanas entered into yoga during its history) to teach about the history of yoga and all that surrounds it. As far as how to approach reading this book: I think you could start on chapter 1 and continue through the end or you could just read different parts each day prior to or after your days asana routine or even when you are bored and have a short time to spare. For me it is a very comprehensive book where I need a second book to read sometimes just because the subject matter is so thorough and opposite to western thought that too much of my mind is required so

I go to an easier book imo - memoirs or historical fiction. This book does the same for me but it's more about the side of yoga beyond the asanas whereas Light on Yoga is solely about the asanas with some philosophy at the beginning. Paperback Three stars is probably not really accurate it is just hard to rate an overview when you do not feel you have enough comprehensive information on the topic being overviewed to give an educated rating on the accuracy of the aforementioned overview, Feuerstein was an Indologist and according to his associate {site_link} Ken Wilber among the foremost Westerns scholar practitioners of yoga. Feuerstein was an Indologist and according to his associate {site_link} Ken Wilber among the foremost Westerns scholar practitioners of yoga. In this ready reckoner of Yoga he provides an unbiased and lucid understanding of diverse spiritual traditions: The Yoga Tradition is an excellent reference book for scholar and practitioner alike, It provides an overall picture of a subject that has many intricate nuances and requires in-depth study to be able to distil the way Feuerstein has done. It includes translations of the Yoga-Sutra with one of the five sections devoted to Patanjali's Yoga Darshan: There are also translations of Shiva-Sutra Narada's Bhakti-Sutra and Goraksha-Paddhati as well as excerpts from other Yoga scriptures ranging from the ancient Rig-Veda to later medieval works. The different spokes of the wheel of Yoga namely Raja-Yoga Hatha-Yoga Jnana-Yoga Karma-Yoga Bhakti-Yoga Mantra Yoga and Laya Yoga are all explicitly explained. Included is a glossary for those non-initiated to the subject as well as a chronology for a historical perspective and a detailed bibliography and notes. While it is an easy reference manual it is also an interesting reader-friendly presentation, The Yoga Tradition is highly recommended for anyone interested in academic or practical spiritual pursuit. Paperback A kind of encyclopedia of yoga for those who want to know vastly more than how it feels. Paperback The Yoga Tradition is a reference book for the history and practical methods of yoga in its myriad forms throughout time and different religious traditions: In its oldest known form Yoga appears to have been the practice of disciplined introspection or meditative focusing in conjunction with sacrificial rituals: He's printed original texts along with analysis of them throughout the book to provide context and origin materials for each tradition, What emerges in The Yoga Tradition is stunning in its complexity as well as sheer variety of methods beliefs and practices, This stock of ideas and practices formed the matrix out of which grew the complex historical phenomenon that later came to be called Yoga: Highly recommended for anyone interested in yoga and looking for a scholar's thorough dissection of its history and forms. Paperback Georg Feuerstein's magnum opus is easily the richest outpouring of yogic knowledge and insight I have ever encountered between two covers, Intimidating because of its length its size (like a textbook) and the sheer mass of terminology topics and texts it covers (and even translates-a few for the first time!). At times I felt like I was swallowing a pill that just wouldn't fit down my gullet-though I knew the pill was good for me so I kept gulping until I got it down:) The first chapter Building Blocks is perhaps not so aptly named, It reads like something written for those who already have a bit of the yogic worldview under their belt and subscribe to its way of thinking, For this reason I would recommend newcomers read Feuerstein's other more introductory books before this one. (I have already reviewed two-The Deeper Dimension of Yoga and The Path of Yoga. There is of course nothing wrong with this except people who want more objective texts may be put off by it: Feuerstein is without doubt one of the most knowledgeable people on the planet as regards the yoga tradition but still I have to wonder about some of the ideas he ascribes to: For example his timeline of India in chapters 3 and 4 is certainly not orthodox as regards most contemporary reckonings of Indian history, He grants an age to the Vedic civilization (4500-2500 BC) considerably in excess of ancient Egypt (3500-500 BC) and this based on pretty slim facts I think, (It seems to me his enthusiasm sometimes get the better of him:) That said it should be admitted that early Indian history is a messy and muddled subject with few (if any) points of certainty. Imagine scholars suddenly announcing that Pericles really lived a hundred years later and you get my drift: So if Feuerstein is speculating or even wrong in his speculations (and how will we ever know for sure?) he can at least be forgiven: From chapter four on the text follows a pretty historically linear timeline. The Vedas are discussed and then the Upanishads with translations of several texts sprinkled throughout: In every case the relation of the texts to yoga its ideas and

practices is elaborated upon: I for one was sad to learn that there is very little surviving of Jainism's early textual corpus, (This is not to say I think he was the equal of the Buddha, It's pretty clear to me that while his attainment must indeed have been great he was in no way comparable to Siddhartha as an intellectual or communicator. Greatness of insight is not always accompanied by equal development of all other parts of the personality: The Buddha was a rarity-perhaps unsurpassed-on account of his high development in so many aspects:)Chapter eight plunges back into Hindu yoga specifically the Epics and of course the Bhagavad Gita: The philosophy of yoga or what began in the Upanishads finds its consummation in the nondualist schools which Feuerstein treats in the next four chapters, Nondualism is of course the philosophical heart of Hinduism though it is clearly overlaid with an exuberant wealth of gods and goddesses rituals and esoterica: These Feuerstein treats extensively even delving into obscure little groups like the Aghoris (who still exist btw!): By chapter fifteen we're getting into my favorite stuff-the yoga upanishads wherein the subject of kundalini comes up: Sikh yoga is briefly touched on and then it's full steam into tantra and hatha yoga: The book ends in the late medieval/early modern period looking at the extensive literature of hatha yoga, I would certainly not recommend this as a first book on the subject, That said if someone has gotten their feet wet and finds they want to get the Big Picture this then is the book I would recommend, It is a book meant to lead on to invite to incite curiosity, I hope it does this and more for you and thereby leads you to greener broader pastures of knowledge and awakening. Paperback There is no doubt that this is the best book on Yoga period, Georg Feuerstein is still one of the most underrated scholars on Yoga and Eastern thought out there: This book has often been referred to as the Yoga phone book for its size, But I will tell you you don't want the book to end once you dive in: Feuerstein explores everything about the Yoga tradition to its nth degree: He also does a fantastic job in covering Vedanta and Samkhya philosophy, He takes you through the whole history of Hindu thought not just Yoga. It is not about the Western version of Yoga that is a poor rip off of Hatha Yoga: This book explains what Yoga truly is and why it is important to follow the tradition and not its cheap imitations: As a writer I find it inspiring to see the length Feuerstein went to produce a piece of work that will be around for hundreds if not thousands of years. But it is his heart and wisdom that keep the fire of this rich tradition burning into the future. Paperback From the foremost living authority on Yoga comes the most comprehensive and reliable treatment of the subject available today, This is a work of impeccable scholarship by a person who has dedicated his life to the understanding and practice of yoga, The book offers a complete overview of every Yogic tradition from the familiar to the lesser-known forms, It also covers all aspects of Hindu Buddhist and Jaina Yoga including history philosophy literature psychology and practice, In addition included are translations of twenty Yoga treatises and the first translation of the Goraksha Paddhati. The Yoga Tradition: Its History Literature Philosophy and Practice



Fascinante completo y revelador, Lectura obligada para quien pretenda tomarse en serio el estudio y la práctica del yoga. Paperback “God in this sense is not the Creator God of deistic religions like Judaism Islam and Christianity, Rather God is the transcendental totality of existence which in the nondualist schools of Hinduism is referred to as brahman or 'Absolute, ' That Absolute is regarded as the essential nature the transcendental Self underlying the human personality, And this singular Reality is considered the ultimate destination of human evolution, Or shall we not say rather to

manifest God?" "Reality is a continuum that we ourselves divide up into a multitude of discrete phenomena and we do so by means of language: For the most part this is of practical usefulness when we want to find our way about in our rather complex universe. However it can also be a handicap because our words may set up barriers that block understanding and stifle love: " "Jnâna-Yoga is fundamentally different from all other forms and stands really unique in the history of the world. It is not the worship of God as an object different from the self and is not a discipline that leads to the attainment of anything distinct from one's own self: It may be described as âtma-upâsana (the worship of God as one's Self). " "What Krishna the divine Lord in human form is saying here is that all activity arises spontaneously as part of the program of Nature prakriti). The idea that 'I do this or that' is delusional a fatal presumption that we habitually superimpose on what is actually occurring: " "Integral Yoga has no prescribed techniques since the inward transformation is accomplished by the divine Power itself. There are no obligatory rituals mantras postures or breathing exercises to be performed: The aspirant must simply open himself or herself to that higher Power which Sri Aurobindo identified with The Mother: This self-opening and calling upon the presence of The Mother is understood as a form of meditation or prayer. Aurobindo advised that practitioners should focus their attention at the heart which has anciently been the secret gateway to the Divine. Faith or inner certitude is deemed a key to spiritual growth. Other important aspects of Integral Yoga practice are chastity (brahmâcârya) truthfulness (satya) and a pervasive disposition of calm (prashânti): " "What is the Self? Sage Yâjñavalkya put it thus in the Brihad-Âranyaka-Upanishad (3. 1): He who breathes with your inhalation (prâna) is your Self (âtman) which is in everything. He who breathes with your exhalation (apâna) is your Self which is in everything. He who breathes with your diffusive breath (vyâna) is your Self which is in everything. He who breathes with your up-breath (udâna) is your Self which is in everything. When asked how that Self is to be conceived Yâjñavalkya continued: You cannot see the Seer of seeing. That supreme Reality which is pure formless Consciousness cannot be adequately described or defined, Upon realization the Self will be found to be infinite eternal utterly real and free as well as unqualifiedly blissful (ânanda). By contrast the various Mahâyâna schools came to regard this approach as relatively barren and selfish and tried to replace it with a more holistic outlook: This included a revision of the value of the emotive and social aspects of human life and of the nature of the Buddhist goal itself. What this means is that the realm of changeable forms is inherently empty (shûnya) and that nirvâna must not be sought outside samsâra. " "The second truth is that desire the thirst or tanhâ (trishnâ) for life—corresponding to Nietzsche's 'will to live'—is the cause of the universally experienced suffering, We tinker with our experiences rather than allow our understanding to penetrate to the root of our separative disposition and its accompanying survival motive. Since desire is anchored in ignorance of our true nature the Mahâyâna teachers look upon ignorance rather than desire as the cause of suffering: When we consider phenomena most profoundly they reveal themselves to us as illusory: But even this illusoriness is illusory for practically speaking there are phenomena that form the content of our experiences: In reality nirvâna and samsâra are both constructions of the unilluminated mind and the yogin must rise beyond them: " "According to the Yogâcâra school the objective world is "mere mind" (citta-mâtra) which is also the basic position of the Lankâ-Avatâra-Sûtra: What this means is that our entire experience is simply that: experience flashes of consciousness without objective substratum: But that fleeting consciousness is in truth the ever-lasting transcendental Consciousness. " "The masters of Sahajayâna taught that Reality cannot be discovered by placing unnatural restraints of one kind or another on human nature, Instead they insisted that we should follow what is the most natural in us that is be true to our own personal imperative, Of course they did not preach that we should simply abandon ourselves to our passions or instincts, Rather their natural or spontaneous approach is the way of abiding in what is inherently true of us which is blissful freedom, " "At the other end of the spectrum is the Zen tradition which is firmly anchored in self-effort: He inaugurated the Ch'an or meditation tradition which was inspired by the Yogâcâra school. Bodhidharma was received by the Emperor Wu-Ti a fervent Buddhist: When asked to define the essential principle of Buddhism Bodhidharma laconically replied "Vast emptiness" which

disturbed the emperor greatly: After this encounter Bodhidharma withdrew to a monastery where he meditated in front of a blank wall for nine years: Later he observed that the mind has to become like a straight-standing wall, "Yoga is the restriction (nirodha) of the fluctuations of consciousness (citta): 3) At other times [there is] conformity [of the Self] with the fluctuations: 4)Comment: In the unenlightened state we do not consciously identify with the Self (purusha) but consider ourselves to be a particular individual with a particular character. "We will start this review of Post-Classical Yoga with the more extreme sects of the ramified Shaiva tradition which has its root in the Vedic Era. Some of the Shaivite practices are rather radical inasmuch as they severely challenge conventional morality. The difference between these two approaches is best epitomized in their contrasting attitudes to sexuality. In India as in many other parts of the world the left side is associated with inauspiciousness or pollution and the right side with auspiciousness purity and what is good. Rather in their exploration of our spiritual potential they acknowledge the existence of the dark or shadow aspects of the human personality and of life in general: More than that they actively associate with that which the "normal" person fears avoids or represses: While success on the spiritual path depends on the guidance of a realized master ultimately it is the grace of Shiva that bestows liberation on the deserving practitioner, Sage Nârada a frequent spokesman for the Bhâgavata religion expresses it thus:'All human emotions are grounded in the erroneous conception of "I" and "mine: " The Absolute the universal Self has neither "I"-sense nor emotions. 23) Hence one should unite [with God] through friendship or enmity peaceableness or fear love or attachment. 25)'"Tantra is a comprehensive enough movement to contain its own antithesis, Thus the pronounced ritualism characteristic of most Tantric schools is for example overcome and even criticized in the schools of the Buddhist Sahajayâna the 'Vehicle of Spontaneity, ' The adepts of this current take the doctrine of the identity between the conditional world and the ultimate Reality as literally as possible, They prescribe neither a path nor a goal because from the viewpoint of spontaneity (sahaja) we are never truly separated from Reality. Our birth the whole adventure of our life and also our death occur against the eternal backdrop of Reality. We are like fish who do not know that they are swimming in water and are continuously sustained by it, The term sahaja means literally "born(ja) together (saha)" which refers to the fact that the empirical reality and the transcendental Reality are coessential, The word has come to connote 'spontaneity' the natural approach to existence prior to interfering thought constructs about Reality. The sahaja-yogin lives from the point of view of enlightenment of Reality. When we love and hate it is the Divine that loves and hates as us: Yet we are forever in search of a 'higher' Reality and this very quest merely reinforces our illusion of being separated from that Reality. The adepts of the Sahaja tradition therefore refused to put forward any program of liberation. "'Yoga is not [attained] through the lotus posture and not by gazing at the tip of the nose. Yoga say the experts of Yoga is the identity (ailcya) of the psyche (jîva) with the [transcendental] Self: " Paperback I first read this book in 2000 as part of my 200-hour Yoga Teacher training. Then in 2004-5 I read it again as part of a distance learning course given by the author Georg Feuerstein, I believe it is the most comprehensive book on Yoga ever published and Dr, Feuerstein to be the foremost Yoga authority in the world today: Paperback While I haven't finished the book I wanted to say something to others who are interested in this book: After skimming through this book for more than a few times at the yoga studio I go I found I kept coming across this book: My thought was that I wanted to understand more about yoga or at least learn more about yoga beyond only the asanas: That blew my mind because I always thought that creativity is limitless: So I went back to read some other reviews and I came across one person that suggested to watch the movie: Yoga Unveiled before reading this book: Now after a few days with the book I fully agree that the movie offers an understandable foundation with which to understand the book better, It wasn't until after watching the documentary that I could understand the book as it was made to be read: In another words after the movie I could more easily understand what the author meant: So far I think it is a great book for someone who is interested in how yoga started and/or someone who is interested in yoga beyond the asanas. Personally the book can be a bit too heavy for my mind to absorb all at once so often I must read some then put the book down

and think about that I just read, I like books that make me think but their were times with this book where I needed to put too much thought into what I just read. I think of this book kinda like the book: Light on Yoga: That book is also not meant to be read from beginning to end but it is something to come back to back to different pages on different days. The book covers a lot of information but I cannot confirm its accuracy so three stars for being relatively interesting but still feeling quite a bit like a list. I also am not sure how I feel about the way in which it was organized[1]

Georg A. Georg A. {site_link} Georg Feuerstein is a well-known yoga scholar. Your search can begin and end with this title. It is an intimidating work. (Actually very little offended me-I'm just being theatrical. I just wish we knew more about what he really taught. IMHO of course. Chapters nine and ten exhaustively treat classical yoga (i.e. His understanding of classical Yoga is phenomenal. Actually he covers a lot more than that. Be careful though this book is the real deal. His scholarship is unmatched when it comes to Yoga. Read it now. Our naming of things in a way creates them. Our words reify or "thingi- fy" reality. Thus even our thoughts are not really generated by us. Thoughts like all processes of Nature are simply arising.4. He is your Self which is in everything. You cannot hear the Hearer of hearing. You cannot think the Thinker of thinking. You cannot understand the Understander of understanding. He is your Self which is in everything. Everything other than Him is irrelevant. (3.4. It must simply be realized. We approach the matter from the wrong end however." "Emptiness is not nothingness but no-thing-ness. It acknowledges Bodhidharma (470-543 C.E.) a learned South Indian monk as its first patriarch. He arrived in China in the year 520 C.E. where he became known as Tamo (Japanese: Daruma). (1.2) Then the Seer [i.e. the transcendental Self] abides in [its] essential form. (1.' (1. This does not mean however that the Self is absent. Rather it is merely obscured. (7.1. [The Divine] sees no distinction whatsoever.(7.1. When we breathe it is the Divine that breathes as us. When we think it is the Divine that thinks as us. So I decided to buy the book. As for the book it is great - very through. Paperback.