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DECEMBER 2005

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PLUS | KNEE SAVERS | IMMUNE BOOSTERS | EMAIL OBSESSED?

she first met in 1971 at a winter solstice retreat in Florida. It was Yogi Bhajan who conferred the Sikh name on her. "Sat Kartar' means Truth Doer," she explains. "The doing, acting, creating aspect of God—the doer in everything." The words "Sat Kartar" are also a mantra in the Sikh tradition. A joyously expansive recording of it is included on *Flow*. "I was looking for mantras that haven't been done very much," says the singer. "Sat Kartar' had never been recorded by anybody. Since it's my name, I thought, 'I need to chant this for my growth.'"

The mantras are traditional, but Sat Kartar composes her own musical settings for them, often adding lyrical elements in English. Much of her musical inspiration comes from Naad Yoga, a yogic science of sound and vibration. "There's an inner sound resonating inside of you, almost like the call of your soul. By doing these chants, meditations, and yoga practices, you come to the point where you're clear and still enough to hear what we call the unstruck melody, or *anand*."

Unlike the Hindu-based *bhakti* chanting popularized by artists like Krishna Das and Jai Uttal, which is a devotional form of yoga, "Kundalini chanting and Sikh *kirtan* are practiced as a seated meditation," Sat Kartar says. "Very often there's a specific asana, breathing practice, *mudra*, and visualization that goes with each mantra. It can be a different kind of practice, although both are wonderful, both are *bhakti*."

Sat Kartar's *kirtans*, or chants, combine elements of concert and yoga practice, energized by live percussion, electric bass, and the singer's open-tuned acoustic guitar playing. Sat Kartar used to lead Friday morning *sadhana*s (yoga sessions) at Golden Bridge Yoga Center in Los Angeles, before settling in Phoenix to be near her two sons, now in their 20s. She teaches Kundalini classes and Naad Yoga workshops locally, integrating these pursuits with her musical career.

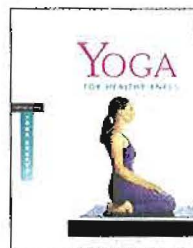
"I feel like my job is to serve people with this music. It's a continuous quest to find ways to make this tradition accessible to people so they can have the experience."

book reviews

YOGA ABS: Moving from Your Core
by Judith Hanson Lasater

YOGA FOR HEALTHY KNEES: What You Need to Know for Pain Prevention and Rehabilitation by Sandy Blaine. Rodmell Press.

These "Yoga Shorts," written by established teachers, offer concise texts (about a hundred pages each) devoted to specific anatomical systems or problems. In *Yoga Abs*, Judith Hanson Lasater stresses an Eastern view of the belly as not only "a place of power" but also "the site of an



intuitive awareness or sense that can be used to enhance your life." Instead of exhorting us to cultivate the stereotypical abs of steel, Lasater reminds us that "the abdomen can be gently rounded yet strong" and gives us a set of asanas designed to achieve such an effect.

Sandy Blaine's *Yoga for Healthy Knees* looks at these troublesome joints, which

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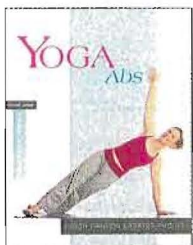
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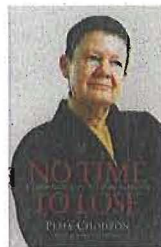
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are often afflicted with pain and injury. Blaine details common causes of knee problems (hyperextension, foot supination and pronation, and tight muscles) before providing a distilled but well-rounded practice she calls “yoga for knee care.” She then concludes with a brief but helpful discussion, “Everyday Knees,” noting ways (besides yoga) to maintain “one of the trickiest, most vulnerable parts of the body.” PHIL CATALFO



NO TIME TO LOSE: A Timely Guide to the Way of the Bodhisattva
by Pema Chödrön. Shambhala.
American-born Tibetan Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön has attracted a huge *sangha* of readers with *When Things Fall Apart* and *The Places That Scare You*, two books that focus on the darker passages of life. Her new work, *No Time to Lose*—about the life of the bodhisattva, the

illuminated being of bottomless compassion who delays entering nirvana until all sentient beings have achieved enlightenment—is a bit sunnier. The chapters are taken from talks Chödrön gave on *The Way of the Bodhisattva* (*Bodhicharyavatara*), an eighth-century text written by the Indian sage Shantideva concerning *bodhichitta*, the “awakened heart.” In this state you transcend the ego and engender the heartfelt “longing to alleviate the suffering of others.” Chödrön’s commentary on Shantideva’s text is wise yet humble and always encouraging. “Don’t worry about results,” she urges. “Just open your heart in an inconceivably big way, in that limitless way that benefits everyone you encounter.” Yet she delivers her comments with a quiet urgency. “When I look at the state of the world today,” she says, “I know [Shantideva’s] message could not possibly be more timely.” P.C.



CHAKRA YOGA: Balancing Energy for Physical, Spiritual, and Mental Well-Being
by Alan Finger and Katrina Repka. Shambhala.
Are you obsessed with your finances? Easily addicted? How about indecisive or aggressive, self-destructive or needy? There’s a good chance your problems can be traced to an imbalance in one or more of your seven main chakras, says Alan Finger, the founder of ISHTA Yoga. (“ISHTA” is both an acronym for “integrated sciences of hatha, Tantra, and Ayurveda” and the Sanskrit word for “wished for” or “beloved.”) Chakras are those elusive, subtle energy centers dotting the vertical center of your body like pearls on a string. The solution, according to Finger, is to “rebalance” these centers through a relatively simple program of asanas, breathing exercises, and visualizations.
Traditionally chakras were aids to meditation, never intended to explain, for example, an inability to commit to a long-term relationship. But Finger has simplified them and pared away much of their complicating detail. He then asks us to

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