South Asian forms of Yoga and Meditation

Background and essential readings:
a short annotated bibliography

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Hardy (1990) is a good basic introduction to South Asian religions, including Tibet. On the philosophy side see Hamilton (2001): it is a very compact overview, but excellent in highlighting key historical and intellectual developments and turning points.

To understand main trends in Hinduism see Brockington (1989): concise but dense, it is a very reliable source.

About Yoga in general see De Michelis (2008) and the Introduction in Jacobsen (2005) for basic orientation. Eliade (1973) is still a good and comprehensive survey, if at times dated.

On the origins of Yoga and Tantra, both Hindu and Buddhist, consult the recent study by Samuel (2008). All the books in this bibliography contain further bibliographical leads, but this text especially so, and the references are up to date.

For the context of Buddhism you can use Rahula (2001) as an introductory book: it gives a classic exposition of the basics. For more comprehensive and detailed overviews see Gethin (1998) and Harvey (1990). The latter book also covers Buddhism beyond South Asia; chapters 2, 3, 4, 8 10, 11, 12 and 13 are especially relevant for the study of Buddhist meditation.

For a learned yet accessible monograph on Buddhist meditation see Shaw (2006): the author collates passages from the Pali Canon thematically and discusses them in relation to the theory and practice of meditation. Modern and contemporary forms of Buddhist meditation are also commented upon.

Connolly (2007) is a basic overall introduction which however covers much needed ground. It also showcases standard ‘received’ knowledge in this area, as may be taught in undergraduate courses and modern yoga schools.

Bibliographical references


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