

SOUTH ASIAN FORMS OF YOGA AND MEDITATION

Background and essential readings: a short annotated bibliography

by Elizabeth De Michelis
University of Oxford
(Faculty of Theology and Oriel College)

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

- Brockington, John L. (1989 [1981]), *The Sacred Thread: Hinduism in its Continuity and Diversity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).
- Connolly, Peter (2007), *A Student's Guide to the History and Philosophy of Yoga* (London: Equinox).
- De Michelis, Elizabeth (2008), 'Modern yoga: history and forms', in Mark Singleton and Jean Byrne (eds.), *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge).
- Eliade, Mircea (1973), *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (Bollingen series, 56; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

- Gethin, Rupert (1998), *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).
- Hamilton, Sue (2001), *Indian Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Hardy, Friedhelm (ed.), (1990), *The Religions of Asia* (first published 1988 as part of *The World's Religions*, London: Routledge).
- Harvey, Peter (1990), *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Jacobsen, Knut A. (ed.), (2005), *Theory and Practice of Yoga : essays in honour of Gerald James Larson* (Leiden: Brill).
- Rahula, Walpola (2001 [1959]), *What the Buddha Taught* (Oxford: Oneworld).
- Samuel, Geoffrey (2008), *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Shaw, Sarah (2006), *Buddhist Meditation: An Anthology of Texts from the Pali Canon* (London and New York: Routledge).

24.12.2008