

relationship between humans. However, there are still some points in this volume not accurate enough<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, considering the obstacles in cross-language research, it does not affect the rigorousness academic attitude and style of this book.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For example, the expression “tell the good China story” (see pp.95-96). This expression and some following ones in this essay are cited from *Why Fiction Matters in Contemporary China* by David Der-wei Wang. The original Chinese version is “讲好中国故事” (tell the China story well) rather than “讲中国好故事” (tell the good China story). Although David Der-wei Wang points out that “the Chinese title for the campaign 讲好中国故事 has also been translated as ‘tell the China story well’” (see notes for Chapter 1, p. 178. David Der-wei Wang. *Why Fiction Matters in Contemporary China*. New Hampshire, Brandeis University Press, 2020.), he insists on translating it into “tell the good China story”. These two translations, however, are endowed with quite different implications. The translation of “讲好中国故事” into “tell the China story well” or “tell the China story” has already been widely accepted and can be further confirmed by official media and authorities.

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TRACING THE PATH OF YOGA: THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN MIND-BODY DISCIPLINE. By Stuart Ray Sarbacker. NY: State University of New York (SUNY) Press, 2021. 451 pp.

In recent times the popularity of Yoga has taken the world by storm, and there has been a rising interest in studying Yoga as a discipline. Stuart Ray Sarbacker, with his book *Tracing the Path of Yoga: The History and Philosophy of Indian Mind-Body Discipline* strives to present a chronological account “on the origin and development of Yoga in its Indian contexts” (3).

Sarbacker acknowledges all the scholars on Yoga and their works which inspired him to write this book. We get a rich oeuvre of literature on Yoga in the acknowledgement section. The book is divided into eight chapters, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. In the introduction, Sarbacker gives an insight into the medieval and modern representations of Yoga.

In the first chapter, ‘Defining Yoga’, Sarbacker addresses the complexity which arises in defining the term because “Yoga . . . has a wide range of meanings, due to its use in a variety of religious and secular contexts” (9). Sarbacker has tried to define “yoga” in relation to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Both the householder and renouncer traditions of Yoga have been analysed. The significance of the *Guru-Śiṣya* (teacher-student) relationship in both *brāhmaṇa* and *śramaṇa* traditions has been emphasised. Sarbacker critiques the power imbalance in this teacher-student relationship which can make the disciples susceptible to abuse. Women's ascetic roles, which were earlier bound to the domestic sphere, “have been adapted to accommodate changing gender roles” (26) in the modern yoga traditions. The concepts of “Yogī, Yoginī, Sādhaka, and Siddha” have been explained. Yoga has been discussed in relation to class, gender and sexuality.

In chapter two, ‘The Indus Civilization and the Vedic Tradition’, the Vedic roots of Yoga is explored. The posture of the figures found in the relics of the Indus Valley Civilization seems to predate yoga posture. The “proto-yoga” Vedic practices of “incantation (*mantra*), asceticism (*tapas*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), celibacy (*brahmacarya*), vow (*vrata*), station (*āśrama*), extract (*soma*), agent (*viṣa*), and herb (*auśadhi*),” (50) is elucidated. The primary focus is on the “proto-yoga” practices and “proto-yogi” figures in the Vedic age.

In chapter three, 'Brāhmaṇical Asceticism and Śramaṇa Traditions', Sarbacker refers to the corresponding links between the *brahmana* and *śramaṇa* traditions. "Vedic concepts such as *tapas*, *prāṇāyāma*, and *brahmacarya*, and the models of Vedic religious specialists such as the *ṛṣi*, *keśin*, and *muni* link Vedic and later Brāhmaṇical and *śramaṇa* ascetic and yogic traditions." (59). The Upaniṣads are a significant part of the literature on Yoga. The various facets of the practice of Yoga in the Upaniṣads have been described meticulously. Sarbacker briefly touches on the evolution of the *śramaṇa* traditions, which opposed the Vedic orthodoxy. The yogic practices in the *śramaṇa* tradition have been discussed succinctly.

In chapter four, 'The Classical Hindu Model of Yoga: Pātañjala Yoga and Aṣṭāṅgayoga' the Indian yoga philosophy of *Yoga Darśana* or "yoga view", also called Pātañjala Yoga, Samkhya-Yoga, has been explained with reference to Patanjali's *Yogasūtra*. The emphasis on the practice of Yoga as a discipline in the form of *Aṣṭāṅgayoga* (eight-limbed Yoga) "represents the process of liberation as demanding mastery in all spheres of human activity, not just the mind." (99)

Chapter five, 'Hindu Epic, Purāṇic, and Scholastic Representations of Yoga', focuses on the frequent occurrence of "yoga" in the Hindu epic and Purāṇic literature and the Hindu legal (*dharmaśāstra*) and philosophical literature. The exalted status of Yoga and its practitioners have been strongly emphasised in the *Bhāgavadgītā* and Hindu *Purāṇa* literature. The introduction of Yoga in the Indian householder tradition has been delineated.

In chapter six, 'Classical Śramaṇa Traditions of Yoga', the significance of Yoga within sectarian and scholastic treatises of the classical *śramaṇa* traditions of Buddhism and Jainism is examined. It focuses on the emergence of Buddhist and Jain literature that places Yoga within an organised system of teachings and practice that outlines the steps leading to spiritual liberation.

In chapter seven, 'The Medieval Transformation of Yoga: Bhakti, Tantra, and Haṭhayoga', the variations in Yoga with respect to the *brāhmaṇa* and *śramaṇa* traditions are propounded. The religious orthodoxy has been contrasted with the emergence of secular devotion (*nirguṇa bhakti*). It gives a general overview of the concepts of the medieval era's *Siddha*, *Mahāsiddha*, and *Haṭhayoga* traditions. The ritualistic practices of Tantra in relation to Hindu and Buddhist traditions have been described.

Chapter eight, 'Modern Yoga Traditions' discusses the contemporary practice of yoga. The modern yoga tradition is represented as a fusion of medieval and cosmopolitan traditions. The popularity of yoga on a global scale has led to the rise of yoga schools. Sarbacker provides a list of noted yoga gurus of contemporary times who have merged the medieval and modern traditions of yoga.

In the conclusion, Sarbacker argues that any study of yoga cannot cover the long and complex history of yoga in its entirety. He re-attempts to define yoga in the Indian context and discusses the various forms of yoga. The rising popularity of yoga with the transformation in Indian culture over the years is addressed.

This book provides a comprehensive approach to the study of yoga as a discipline. Sarbacker presents a well-researched and factual analysis of yoga as a spiritual and philosophical tradition. The way he interconnects the various concepts of yoga in both *brāhmaṇa* and *śramaṇa* traditions is commendable. The text provides a brief insight into the origin and development of Buddhism and Jainism, which will be beneficial for the readers in understanding the *śramaṇa* traditions.

At times Sarbacker disregards the critical lens and presents the information as it is. He briefly states the marginalisation of female yoga practitioners in the medieval era and the lack of female voice in the yogic practices. The role of women and goddesses in the ritualistic practise of Tantra could have been elaborated as it would have strengthened their position. Despite these shortcomings, the book will be an excellent resource to begin with, the study of yoga philosophy.