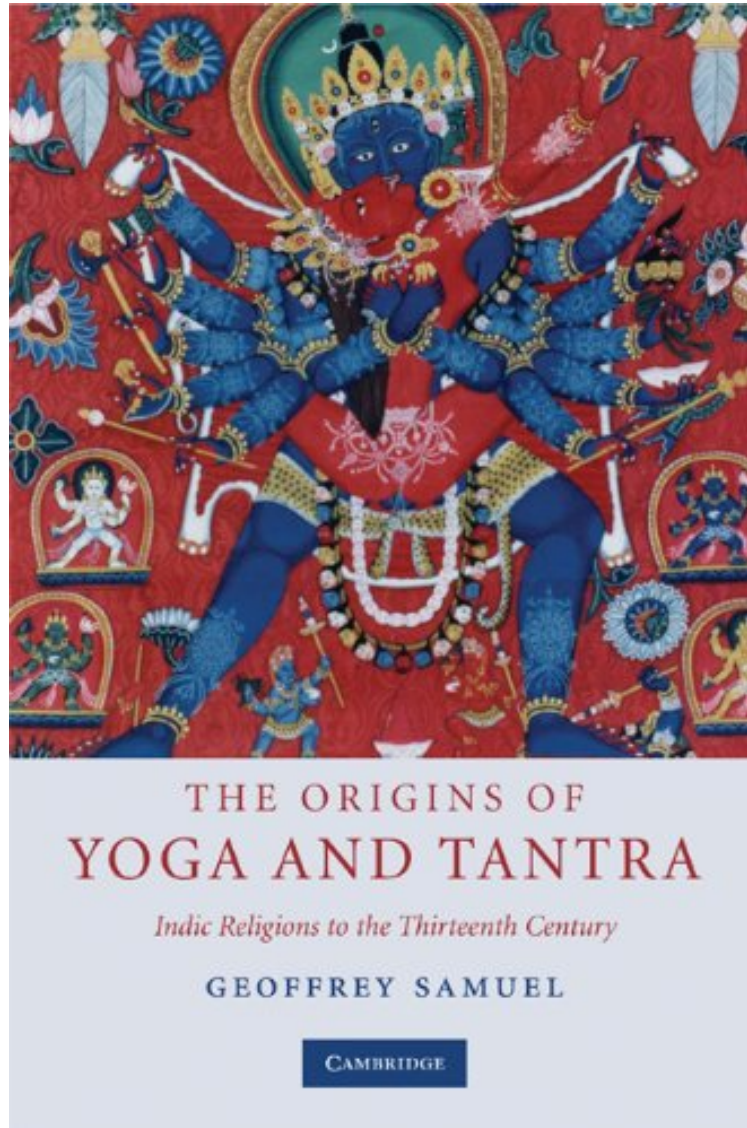


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The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century

Geoffrey Samuel

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Geoffrey Samuel : The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent on the early development of Indic religions By jonnos Samuel's book is not what the title says; at least it's not about the origin of yoga. Rather, it's about the early development of Indic religions in general and especially how the various ascetic and tantric practices developed. This

is a huge subject and Samuel includes a vast amount of reference material. The first and for me the most interesting part of the book focuses on how Brahmanism on the one hand and Buddhism, Jainism etc. on the other hand both influenced each other, and also about how popular beliefs in myths and various types of deities interacted with the ascetic and philosophic strains to produce the "classic" versions of these religions. Much food for thought if you are interested in the early history of Indic religions. The only thing missing is a discussion of the development of the rich meditation practices especially in Buddhism, and how this relates to the other subjects just mentioned. But this is admittedly a difficult and huge subject in itself. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book but not popular reading. By SonnetLI really enjoyed and learned a lot from this book, I found the writing engaging, and appreciate the author's attention to detail. Unfortunately, the answer to many of my questions about the history of yoga turns out to be "no one knows." Still, I really appreciate the author's honesty in saying that instead of just leaving it out or spinning some story. Caveat, this is a pretty dense text, not necessarily popular reading. Good intro to what early Aryan/vedic societies believed. Not 100% clear what "tantra" means - although that was also part of the point of the work - that the term "tantra" is not clearly defined. Here it means primarily "transgressive" attitudes, although I did not completely understand all of what goes into it - the using of different symbols and gods to represent a central god. Maybe on the second reading I will understand more. I really appreciate the author's humility in front of the difficulties of understanding how people thousands of years ago thought, as well in personal terms as a researcher. Example: On the content of the sramana teachings (p. 133): "I have no real confidence of coming up with anything more secure or final than my predecessors, many of them scholars with competences far greater than mine in relation to the textual material. Nor does what follows have any real claim to originality. Something, however, does need to be said at this point in the book." In comparison with other scholarly works - at least he goes on to describe it, rather than forcing you to look for some other book! 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars. By dheepa sundaram. Great book on the history and development of Yoga from a readable but academic perspective.

Yoga, tantra and other forms of Asian meditation are practised in modernized forms throughout the world today, but most introductions to Hinduism or Buddhism tell only part of the story of how they developed. This book is an interpretation of the history of Indic religions up to around 1200 CE, with particular focus on the development of yogic and tantric traditions. It assesses how much we really know about this period, and asks what sense we can make of the evolution of yogic and tantric practices, which were to become such central and important features of the Indic religious scene. Its originality lies in seeking to understand these traditions in terms of the total social and religious context of South Asian society during this period, including the religious practices of the general population with their close engagement with family, gender, economic life and other pragmatic concerns.

'... a masterful book that I am very grateful to have read ...' Yoga and Tantra. About the Author: Geoffrey Samuel is Professorial Fellow at the School of Religious and Theological Studies at Cardiff University. His publications include *Mind, Body and Culture: Anthropology and the Biological Interface* (2006).