nature ought to be more aware of this-worldly goals evident in the premodern yogic asceticism in India, including beauty, strength, and supernormal powers, divinising the aspirant, the ultimate in personal empowerment. Yoga has always had moral ambiguities and a wide range of desired outcomes. Fruitful contrasts between the premodern yogas and those of today continue in the last essay, focusing on sexuality. Mikel Burley’s ‘From Fusion to Confusion: A Consideration of Sex and Sexuality in Traditional and Contemporary Yoga’, concludes the volume on a lighter note, the confusion facing modern students of yoga in the face of the mixed messages of the eroticised and commercialised yogic body in coed posture classes versus the ascetic ideals in traditional texts. Once again, deeper scholarship reveals a convoluted sexual heritage open to modern innovation.

Yoga in the Modern World comes with an introduction and a brief index. For students and researchers interested in modern postural yoga, it is an informative, accessible source for recent directions in scholarship. The modest size of the articles and the volume itself, though a useful contribution, argue the need for more scholarship in the area. The roots of modern yoga are coming to light, but the branches themselves and their significance qua religion need deeper exploration. In particular the study of ancient and modern meditative yoga, absent here, needs to be addressed.

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Diana Dimitrova’s Gender, Religion, and Modern Hindi Drama provides a number of important insights with respect to conceptualisations and representations of gender and femininity through multifaceted discourses of Hindu religion and mythology in Hindi drama. By situating her analysis in the larger methodological frameworks of contemporary Hindi literary criticism and the history of Hindi theatre, Dimitrova unravels various ideological strands of both conservative and progressive interpretations of Hinduism and gender on stage. Her in-depth reading of individual plays by some of the canonical figures of Hindi theatre in modern times such as Bhāratendu Hariścandra (1850–85), Jayśankar Prasad (1889–1937), Mohan Rākeś (1925–72), and Upendranāth Aśk (1910–96) reveals the historical, literary, and religious impulses behind the construction of images of the feminine
in Hindi drama and also illustrate the oscillation of these portrayals between conservative norms of womanhood and the subversion of these traditional gender roles in both colonial and postcolonial India.

The chapters in this book are thematically arranged and trace the evolution of questions regarding women’s position in society and possibilities of their agency in the cultural clash between tradition and modernity through different phases of modern Hindi drama. The book has a broad chronological spread—beginning from the late nineteenth century till almost the end of twentieth century—which highlights both the departures and continuities in the representational structures of Indian theatre and literature. Chapter 1 situates the history of modern Hindi theatre and its use of religious imagery within the broader trends of representation in nationalist discourse that frequently used Hindu mythology and gender roles to allegorise India’s independence struggle against colonial rule and to construct a binary between Indian and Western cultures in the postcolonial era. Chapter 2 takes a comprehensive look at the images of the feminine in Hindu tradition from ancient to modern times and engages in an exceedingly relevant debate about whether the traditional images of empowered Hindu goddesses translate into agency for real women and lead to their empowerment and liberation in Hindu society. Chapter 3 analyses the interpretations of gender roles in the work of prominent male playwrights to demonstrate how a dichotomous trend of remythologising the Hindu tradition emerged in Hindi drama to endorse normative religious ideas of *strīdharma* (women’s duties) and *pativrata* (devotion to the husband) as ideals of womanhood on the one hand and to liberate women from the confines of such constructs through progressive reinterpretations of historical, literary, and mythical role models such as Draupadi and Mīrā on the other. Chapter 4 looks specifically at the works of a famous Hindi writer, Upendranāth Āśk, who constructs women as figures of rebellion in his plays in order to question repressive and degrading social practices perpetrated in the name of religion and tradition. Through her close reading of individual plays, Dimitrova shows how Āśk combines religious concepts such as *śakti* (divine feminine power) with European theatre and its modes of modernist expression to address important women’s issues like equality and education in modern India. Chapter 5 takes us into the world of figure conception and characterisation to provide a glimpse of the literary and theatrical techniques required for the construction of female dramatis personae within the framework of Hindu tradition. In her conclusion, Dimitrova brings together many disparate elements together to present an extremely cogent commentary on the multifarious uses of religion and gender in Indian literature. She also highlights the many contradictions embedded in the dramatists’ choice and interpretation of gendered religious imagery while forming a distinct and well-defined canon for modern Hindi drama. Her book also has a summary of dramas and an extensive bibliography of source texts which can be very useful for researchers in the field.
By tracing the development of theatre and other forms of performance in India and exploring their links with both the distant past and modern ideas, *Gender, Religion, and Modern Hindi Drama* builds on and adds to Dimitrova’s own research and continued interest in the political and social dimensions of Indian theatrical traditions, as exemplified in her earlier book *Western Tradition and Naturalistic Hindi Theatre* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), and her recent edited volume, *Religion in Literature and Film in South Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Dimitrova’s diachronic and synchronic study of Hindi theatre in *Gender, Religion, and Modern Hindi Drama* addresses the interconnectedness of culture and politics in India. She investigates the relevance of religious imagery in affirming or contradicting existing perceptions of women’s position in masculinist constructions of Indian culture, and thus highlights the intersections of language and literature with the discourses of nationalism. Her extensive use of sources from ancient Sanskrit texts to modern Hindi writings provides the reader with a wide-ranging and variegated perspective on the multiple intersections of religion and gender in both history and literary practices.

This slim volume offers valuable insights into the dynamic spectrum of gendered images within Hinduism itself and challenges the hegemonic construction of Hindu religion as a singular and monolithic discourse in recent appropriations of its imagery by contemporary Indian politics. It is a significant addition to interdisciplinary investigations into the relationship of literature, history, and religion in South Asia.

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This study and translation of the *Virūpākṣapaṇcāśikā* by David Lawrence provides a welcome addition to Indological studies of Tantra. With the current overabundance of new translations and retranslations of the *Bhagavad Gitā*, it is refreshing to see a translation of a relatively unknown Tantric text made accessible to a wider audience. The only other English translation of the *Virūpākṣapaṇcāśikā* lies tucked away in the archives of Ph.D. dissertations at Benares Hindu University in that