



January 1997

### Book Review: "Meditation"

Anand NAYAK

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/jhcs>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

NAYAK, Anand (1997) "Book Review: "Meditation"," *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*: Vol. 10, Article 24.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7825/2164-6279.1170>

The *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* is a publication of the [Society for Hindu-Christian Studies](#). The digital version is made available by Digital Commons @ Butler University. For questions about the Journal or the Society, please contact [cbauman@butler.edu](mailto:cbauman@butler.edu). For more information about Digital Commons @ Butler University, please contact [digitalscholarship@butler.edu](mailto:digitalscholarship@butler.edu).

Christians among the contributors are more in number than the Hindus. But it is a praiseworthy venture.

Anand Amaladass, S.J.  
Madras

***Meditation.*** Klaus Engle. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995.

**MEDITATION** IS NO longer an exclusive religious and spiritual practice today. It is offered, taught, and practised in a variety of milieus and groups of people in search of spiritual well-being, in psychological and psychiatric therapies as well as in physical training centres and even in sports clubs. Engle's work tries to counteract this modern reductionism of what is fundamentally a spiritual practice with a spiritual goal. Its real worth is that we have here a compendium of all possible traditions of meditation developed in the Eastern as well as in the Western world, briefly presented in their historical background. Thus we read about the varieties of techniques issuing from the traditions of yoga and the buddhist traditions. The physical meditations proposed in the empirical research takes a large part of this work. The last chapter attempts to put order in this meditation jungle: unipolar models attempting at relaxation, regression, or progression; bipolar models with subjective-objective, immanent-transcendent, introvert-extrovert, and the like categories; complex models with

ascendance, descendance, and transcendence polarities. The book provides also a list of spiritual masters and mystics connected with the techniques of meditation.

Looking at the bibliography it becomes evident that Engle works practically only with secondary literature except for some more recent testimonies on the experience of meditation. The concept of meditation and why and how such a variety of spiritual and religious techniques could be brought under this concept, is nowhere discussed. The technical Sanskrit terms are not put in with diacritical marks and are sometimes badly written.

As we said above, the book is nevertheless valuable to get initial information on meditation practised in the present-day spiritual circles predominantly influenced by a new-age ideology and which academic circles sometimes have to deal with.

Anand NAYAK  
University of Fribourg

***Zeit und Geschichte im Viṣṇupurāna.*** Heinz Werner Wessler. Bern: Peter Lang, 1995.

**THE ITIHĀSA AND purāna** literatures have developed extraordinary concepts of time and revelled into fantastic discussions on them in spite of their timeless outlook of life and salvation. Wessler takes up a text analysis of the *Viṣṇupurāna* and brings out its concept and perception of time and their eschatological implications. The work in fact

is a history of time in Hinduism, starting from the vedas through the epics, an in-depth study of the fundamental time concepts of *yuga*, *yugānta*, *kalpa*, *manvantara*, *vamśa*, *pralaya*, and so forth. These mythological concepts are brought in contrast with the cosmic and historical chronology underlying the entire Hindu