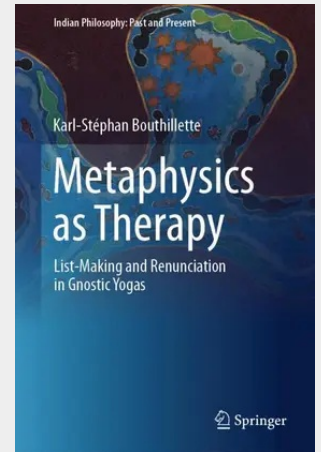


Metaphysics as Therapy

List-Making and Renunciation in Gnostic Yogas

This book examines the significance of metaphysical list-making as a determining feature of 'spiritual exercises' in South Asian gnostic yogas. It examines how these ancient traditions sought spiritual transformation through the dialectical practice of taxonomy. It highlights the gnostic thread that intersects 'spiritual exercises' and 'ways of life' in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jaina circles. It fills a gap in yoga studies by proposing a new understanding of jñāna-yoga (yoga of knowledge). Departing from mainstream Anglophone philosophical traditions, it articulates an original meta-theory of philosophical practice, explaining how philosophy can be 'therapeutic' in concrete terms. The book theorizes yogic Gnosticism, as a South Asian religious undercurrent and as a distinctive form of philosophical practice and ascetic way of life internalizing a sacrificial worldview. Finally, the book analyzes four literary case studies, presenting therapeutic methods in competing gnostic traditions, namely, the Verses on Saṅkhyā of Īśvarakṛishṇa; the Advaita Instructions on the Doctrine of Gauḍapada; the Buddhist Heart Sutra; and the Twelve Contemplations of the Jaina Kundakunda. The groundbreaking multidisciplinary and trans-sectarian book offers a must-read for scholars across the fields of world philosophy and religious studies.

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