



Meditation and Culture: The Interplay of Practice and Context

Halvor Eifring (Editor)

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Behind the stereotype of a solitary meditator closing his eyes to the world, meditation always takes place in close interaction with the surrounding culture. *Meditation and Culture: The Interplay of Practice and Context* explores cases in which the relation between meditative practice and cultural context is particularly complex.

The internationally-renowned contributors discuss practices that travel from one culture to another, or are surrounded by competing cultures. They explore cultures that bring together competing practices, or that are themselves mosaics of elements of different origins. They seek to answer the question: What is the relationship between meditation and culture?

The effects of meditation may arise from its symbolic value within larger webs of cultural meaning, as in the contextual view that still dominates cultural and religious studies. They may also be psychobiological responses to the practice itself, the cultural context merely acting as a catalyst for processes originating in the body and mind of the practitioner. *Meditation and Culture* gives no single definitive explanation, but taken together, the different viewpoints presented point to the complexity of the relationship.

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