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By William R. Pinch



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Many people assume, largely because of Gandhi's legacy, that Hinduism is a religion of non-violence. In this 2006 book William R. Pinch shows just how wrong this assumption is. Using the life of Anupgiri Gosain, a Hindu ascetic who lived at the end of the eighteenth century, he demonstrates that Hindu warrior ascetics were an important component of the South Asian military labor market in the medieval and early modern Indian past, and crucial to the rise of British imperialism. Today, they occupy a prominent place in modern Indian imaginations, ironically as romantic defenders of a Hindu India against foreign invasion, even though they are almost totally absent from Indian history. William R. Pinch's innovative and gloriously composed book sets out to piece together the story of the rise and demise of warrior asceticism in India from the 1500s to the present. It will appeal to students of religion and historians of empire.



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"Pinch has discovered and employed wonderful visual materials, and many oral traditions of both Saiva and Vaisnava ascetics to match his thorough research in Company records."

David L. Curley, *Pacific Affairs*

"Yogis seem to have gone particularly out of control during the eighteenth-century anarchy between the fall of the Mughals and the rise of the British. This is a subject explored by William Pinch in his brilliant 2006 study of the militant yogis of the period, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*."

William Dalrymple, *The New York Review of Books*

About the Author

William R. Pinch is Associate Professor of History at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. He is the author of *Peasants and Monks in British India* (1996).

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