

Dakṣiṇācāra

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The term **Dakshinachara** ([Right-Hand Path](#)) is a technical term used to refer to [Tantric sects](#) that do not engage in [heterodox](#) practices. In contrast, [Vamachara](#) ([Left-Hand Path](#)) is used to describe particular tantric practices that are considered [heterodox](#) according to usual [Hindu](#) social norms.

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Etymology

N. N. Bhattacharyya explains the Sanskrit technical term [Ācāra](#) as follows:

" [t]he means of spiritual attainment which varies from person to person according to competence.... Ācāras are generally of seven kinds -- Veda, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Dakṣiṇa, Vāma, Siddhāṇṭa, and Kaula, falling into two broad categories -- Dakṣiṇa and Vāma. Interpretations vary regarding the nature and grouping of the ācāras."^[1]

[Dakṣiṇa](#) mans "right".^[2] For this reason, the term Dakṣiṇāra is often translated "Right-hand practice".

Practices

The *Brahma Yamala*, a [Tantric text](#), says there are three currents of tradition (dakshina, vama, and madhyama) characterized respectively by the predominance of each of the three [gunas](#) (sattva, rajas, and tamas). According to this text, dakshina is characterized by [sattva](#), and is pure; Madhyama, characterized by [rajas](#), is mixed; and Vama, characterized by [tamas](#), is impure. The Tantras of each class follow a particular line of spiritual practices.^[3] Dakshinachara consists of traditional Hindu practices such as [asceticism](#) and [meditation](#).

See also

- [Left-Hand Path and Right-Hand Path](#)
- [Pañcaratras](#)
- [Tantra](#)

Notes

1. ^ Bhattacharyya (1999) pp. 368-69.
2. ^ Macdonell, A. A. (1996) p. 115.
3. ^ Bagchi, P. C. "Evolution of the Tantras" in: Prabhananda (2000) pp. 13-14.

References

- Bhattacharya, N. N. *History of the Tantric Religion*. Second Revised Edition. Manohar Publications, Delhi, 1999. [ISBN 81-7304-025-7](#)
- Macdonell, Arthur Anthony. *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*. Munshiram Monoharlal Publishers. 1996 Edition. [ISBN 81-215-0715-4](#)
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