

Tantra In Practice Princeton Readings In Religions

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*Princeton Readings in Religion and
Violence* Shambhala Publications

This book provides accurate, accessible translations of three classics of medieval Indian Buddhist mysticism. Since their composition around 1000 CE, these poems have exerted a powerful influence on spiritual life.

Kali's Child University of Chicago Press
This volume highlights the relevance of globalization and the insights of gender studies and religious studies for feminist theology. It focuses on the changing global contexts for the field and its movement towards new models of theology, distinct from the forms of traditional Christian systematic theology and of secular feminism.

Tantric Treasures Univ of California Press
A practical guide for both individuals and couples to transform sexual energy into spiritual and erotic fulfillment • Explains how to awaken advanced stages of sexual development for spiritual intimacy and deep erotic satisfaction • Includes illustrated instructions for exercises and techniques based on yoga, kundalini, breathing practices, mantra chanting, and chakra meditation • Explores how this practice can deepen a life partnership, enhance creativity, heal emotional scars, and awaken new understandings of gender Sexual development does not end in adolescence. There are advanced stages of glandular, emotional, and erotic development based in the lifelong "puberty of the spine." Known in India as kundalini awakening, these stages form the energetic basis of all yoga forms and deeper erotic aspirations. They present an opportunity for couples and individuals to explore the consciousness-expanding abilities of sexual energy as both spirituality and sexuality transform into what Michel Foucault called *ars erotica*, far beyond the Freudian *scientia sexualis* sexuality of the Western world. Offering a guide to the advanced stages of human

sexuality and a passionately infused tantric yoga practice, Stuart Sovatsky explains how to awaken the complete spinal puberty, resulting in spiritual intimacy and orgasmic pineal maturity that far surpasses the gratifications of modern sexuality. With illustrated instructions, he reveals flow-yoga asanas, mantras, and devotional breathing practices for solo kundalini yoga as well as couples' yoga practices and chakra meditations to awaken the heart and the divinely eroticized mind. He shares inspiring stories from those on this path about ever-deepening life partnerships, enriched family life, enhanced personal creativity, profound new understandings of conception, masculinity, femininity, and gender itself as well as healing emotional scars of romantic breakups and sexual abuse. Sovatsky shows that by transcending conventional Western sexuality and returning to the *ars erotica* beliefs of ancient India, we can harness the divine energy--glimpsed for only an instant by most people--at the heart of all erotic yearning.

Karmamudra University of Chicago Press
Gendun Chopel is considered the most important Tibetan intellectual of the twentieth century. His life spanned the two defining moments in modern Tibetan history: the entry into Lhasa by British troops in 1904 and by Chinese troops in 1951. Recognized as an incarnate lama while he was a child, Gendun Chopel excelled in the traditional monastic curriculum and went on to become expert in fields as diverse as philosophy, history, linguistics, geography, and tantric Buddhism. Near the end of his life, before he was persecuted and imprisoned by the government of the young Dalai Lama, he would dictate the *Adornment for Nagarjuna's Thought*, a work on *Madhyamaka*, or "Middle Way," philosophy. It sparked controversy immediately upon its publication and continues to do so today. The *Madman's Middle Way* presents the first English translation of this major Tibetan Buddhist work, accompanied by an essay on Gendun Chopel's life liberally interspersed

with passages from his writings. Donald S. Lopez Jr. also provides a commentary that sheds light on the doctrinal context of the *Adornment* and summarizes its key arguments. Ultimately, Lopez examines the long-standing debate over whether Gendun Chopel in fact is the author of the *Adornment*; the heated critical response to the work by Tibetan monks of the Dalai Lama's sect; and what the *Adornment* tells us about Tibetan Buddhism's encounter with modernity. The result is an insightful glimpse into a provocative and enigmatic work that will be of great interest to anyone seriously interested in Buddhism or Asian religions.

The Alchemical Body Notion Press
How Christian leaders adapted the governmental practices and political thought of their Muslim rulers in the Abbasid caliphate The Imam of the Christians examines how Christian leaders adopted and adapted the political practices and ideas of their Muslim rulers between 750 and 850 in the Abbasid caliphate in the Jazira (modern eastern Turkey and northern Syria). Focusing on the writings of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, the patriarch of the Jacobite church, Philip Wood describes how this encounter produced an Islamicate Christianity that differed from the Christianities of Byzantium and western Europe in far more than just theology. In doing so, Wood opens a new window on the world of early Islam and Muslims' interactions with other religious communities. Wood shows how Dionysius and other Christian clerics, by forging close ties with Muslim elites, were able to command greater power over their coreligionists, such as the right to issue canons regulating the lives of lay people, gather tithes, and use state troops to arrest opponents. In his writings, Dionysius advertises his ease in the courts of 'Abd Allah ibn Tahir in Raqqa and the caliph al-Ma'mun in Baghdad, presenting himself as an effective advocate for the interests of his fellow Christians because of his knowledge of Arabic and his ability to redeploy Islamic ideas to his own advantage. Strikingly, Dionysius even claims that, like al-Ma'mun, he is an imam

since he leads his people in prayer and rules them by popular consent. A wide-ranging examination of Middle Eastern Christian life during a critical period in the development of Islam, *The Imam of the Christians* is also a case study of the surprising workings of cultural and religious adaptation.

The Madman's Middle Way Princeton University Press

A richly illustrated tapestry of interwoven studies spanning some six thousand years of history, *Dæmons Are Forever* is at once a record of archaic contacts and transactions between humans and protean spirit beings—dæmons—and an account of exchanges, among human populations, of the science of spirit beings: dæmonology. Since the time of the Indo-European migrations, and especially following the opening of the Silk Road, a common dæmonological vernacular has been shared among populations ranging from East and South Asia to Northern Europe. In this virtuoso work of historical sleuthing, David Gordon White recovers the trajectories of both the “inner demons” cohabiting the bodies of their human hosts and the “outer dæmons” that those same humans recognized each time they encountered them in their enchanted haunts: sylvan pools, sites of geothermal eruptions, and dark forest groves. Along the way, he invites his readers to reconsider the potential and promise of the historical method in religious studies, suggesting that a “connected histories” approach to Eurasian dæmonology may serve as a model for restoring history to its proper place at the heart of the discipline of the history of religions.

The Imam of the Christians Walter de Gruyter

The essays in this volume, written by specialists working in the field of tantric studies, attempt to trace processes of transformation and transfer that occurred in the history of tantra from around the seventh century and up to the present. The volume gathers contributions on South Asia, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Japan, North America, and Western Europe. The chapters cover a wide thematic area, which includes modern Bengali tantric practitioners, tantric ritual in medieval China, the South Asian cults of the mother goddesses, the way of Buddhism into Mongolia, and countercultural echoes of contemporary tantric studies.

Tantric Jesus Princeton University Press
For those who wonder what relation actual Tantric practices bear to the “Tantric sex” currently being marketed so successfully in the West, David Gordon White has a simple answer: there is none. Sweeping

away centuries of misunderstandings and misrepresentations, White returns to original texts, images, and ritual practices to reconstruct the history of South Asian Tantra from the medieval period to the present day. *Kiss of the Yogini* focuses on what White identifies as the sole truly distinctive feature of South Asian Tantra: sexualized ritual practices, especially as expressed in the medieval Kaula rites. Such practices centered on the exchange of powerful, transformative sexual fluids between male practitioners and wild female bird and animal spirits known as Yoginis. It was only by “drinking” the sexual fluids of the Yoginis that men could enter the family of the supreme godhead and thereby obtain supernatural powers and transform themselves into gods. By focusing on sexual rituals, White resituates South Asian Tantra, in its precolonial form, at the center of religious, social, and political life, arguing that Tantra was the mainstream, and that in many ways it continues to influence contemporary Hinduism, even if reformist misunderstandings relegate it to a marginal position. *Kiss of the Yogini* contains White's own translations from over a dozen Tantras that have never before been translated into any European language. It will prove to be the definitive work for persons seeking to understand Tantra and the crucial role it has played in South Asian history, society, culture, and religion.

Daemons Are Forever Princeton University Press

Yoga, tantra and other forms of Asian meditation are practised in modernized forms throughout the world today, but most introductions to Hinduism or Buddhism tell only part of the story of how they developed. This book is an interpretation of the history of Indic religions up to around 1200 CE, with particular focus on the development of yogic and tantric traditions. It assesses how much we really know about this period, and asks what sense we can make of the evolution of yogic and tantric practices, which were to become such central and important features of the Indic religious scene. Its originality lies in seeking to understand these traditions in terms of the total social and religious context of South Asian society during this period, including the religious practices of the general population with their close engagement with family, gender, economic life and other pragmatic concerns.

The Origins of Yoga and Tantra University of Chicago Press

As David White explains in the

Introduction to Tantra in Practice, Tantra is an Asian body of beliefs and practices that seeks to channel the divine energy that grounds the universe, in creative and liberating ways. The subsequent chapters reflect the wide geographical and temporal scope of Tantra by examining thirty-six texts from China, India, Japan, Nepal, and Tibet, ranging from the seventh century to the present day, and representing the full range of Tantric experience—Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and even Islamic. Each text has been chosen and translated, often for the first time, by an international expert in the field who also provides detailed background material. Students of Asian religions and general readers alike will find the book rich and informative. The book includes plays, transcribed interviews, poetry, parodies, inscriptions, instructional texts, scriptures, philosophical conjectures, dreams, and astronomical speculations, each text illustrating one of the diverse traditions and practices of Tantra. Thus, the nineteenth-century Indian Buddhist Garland of Gems, a series of songs, warns against the illusion of appearance by referring to bees, yogurt, and the fire of Malaya Mountain; while fourteenth-century Chinese Buddhist manuscripts detail how to prosper through the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper by burning incense, making offerings to scriptures, and chanting incantations. In a transcribed conversation, a modern Hindu priest in Bengal candidly explains how he serves the black Goddess Kali and feeds temple skulls lentils, wine, or rice; a seventeenth-century Nepalese Hindu praise-poem hammered into the golden doors to the temple of the Goddess Taleju lists a king's faults and begs her forgiveness and grace. An introduction accompanies each text, identifying its period and genre, discussing the history and influence of the work, and identifying points of particular interest or difficulty. The first book to bring together texts from the entire range of Tantric phenomena, *Tantra in Practice* continues the Princeton Readings in Religions series. The breadth of work included, geographic areas spanned, and expert scholarship highlighting each piece serve to expand our understanding of what it means to practice Tantra.

Passionate Enlightenment Princeton University Press

“An impressive and important cross-cultural study that has vast implications for history, religion, anthropology, folklore, and other fields. . . . Remarkably wide-ranging and extremely well-documented, it covers (among much else) the following: medieval Christian legends such as the

14th-century Ethiopian Gadla Hawaryat (Contendings of the Apostles) that had their roots in Parthian Gnosticism and Manichaeism; dog-stars (especially Sirius), dog-days, and canine psychopomps in the ancient and Hellenistic world; the cynocephalic hordes of the ancient geographers; the legend of Prester John; Visvamisra and the Svapacas ("Dog-Cookers"); the Dog Rong ("warlike barbarians") during the Xia, Shang, and Zhou periods; the nochoy ghajar (Mongolian for "Dog Country") of the Khitans; the Panju myth of the Southern Man and Yao "barbarians" from chapter 116 of the History of the Latter Han and variants in a series of later texts; and the importance of dogs in ancient Chinese burial rites. . . . Extremely well-researched and highly significant."—Victor H. Mair, *Asian Folklore Studies*

Tantra in Practice Oxford University Press on Demand

Roger Jackson provides accurate, accessible translations of three classics of medieval Indian Buddhist mysticism: the "couplet-treasures" of the great tantric masters Saraha, Kanha, and Tilopa. Since their composition around 1000 CE, these poems have exerted a powerful influence on spiritual life, as well as poetry and song, in India, Nepal, and Tibet. Jackson's fresh translations allow the poetry to shine through, capturing the sense and spirit of the poems in the original. Jackson offers a thorough introduction that deftly summarizes the latest scholarship, situating the poems in their historical context and making them accessible not only to scholars but also to students and practitioners.

The Ways of Zen Simon and Schuster
Imagining the divine as female is rare—even controversial—in most religions. Hinduism, by contrast, preserves a rich and continuous tradition of goddess worship. A Garland of Forgotten Goddesses conveys the diversity of this tradition by bringing together a fresh array of captivating and largely overlooked Hindu goddess tales from different regions. As the first such anthology of goddess narratives in translation, this collection highlights a range of sources from ancient myths to modern lore. The goddesses featured here battle demons, perform miracles, and grant rare Tantric visions to their devotees. Each translation is paired with a short essay that explains the goddess's historical and social context, elucidating the ways religion adapts to changing times.

Kiss of the Yogini Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company

From bestselling cartoonist C. C. Tsai, a

delightfully illustrated collection of classic Zen Buddhist stories that enlighten as they entertain. C. C. Tsai is one of Asia's most popular cartoonists, and his editions of the Chinese classics have sold more than 40 million copies in over twenty languages. In *The Ways of Zen*, he has created an entertaining and enlightening masterpiece from the rich collections of the Zen Buddhist tradition, bringing classic stories to life in delightful language and vividly detailed comic illustrations. Combining all the stories previously published in Tsai's *Wisdom of the Zen Masters* and *Zen Speaks*, this is the artist's largest collection of selections from the most important and famous Zen texts. The story of the illiterate wood-peddler Huineng, who improbably rises to become the most famous Zen patriarch, is joined by others that trace the development of the five major sects of Zen Buddhism through other masters such as Mazu, Linji, and Yunmen. A shattered antique, a blind man carrying a lantern, sutras set on fire, a cow jumping through a window—each story leads the reader to reflect on fundamental Buddhist ideas. *The Ways of Zen* also features the original Chinese text in side columns on each page, enriching the book for readers and students of Chinese without distracting from the English-language cartoons. Filled with memorable anecdotes and disarming wisdom, *The Ways of Zen* is a perfect introduction to Zen Buddhism and an essential addition to any Zen collection. *Myths of the Dog-Man* Princeton University Press

The Heart Sutra is perhaps the most famous Buddhist text, traditionally regarded as a potent expression of emptiness and of the Buddha's perfect wisdom. This brief, seemingly simple work was the subject of more commentaries in Asia than any other sutra. In *Elaborations on Emptiness*, Donald Lopez explores for the first time the elaborate philosophical and ritual uses of the Heart Sutra in India, Tibet, and the West. Included here are full translations of the eight extant Indian commentaries. Interspersed with the translations are six essays that examine the unusual roles the Heart Sutra has played: it has been used as a mantra, an exorcism text, a tantric meditation guide, and as the material for comparative philosophy. Taken together, the translations and essays that form *Elaborations on Emptiness* demonstrate why commentary is as central to modern scholarship on Buddhism as it was for ancient Buddhists. Lopez reveals unexpected points of instability and contradiction in the Heart Sutra, which, in

the end, turns out to be the most malleable of texts, where the logic of commentary serves as a tool of both tradition and transgression.

Dakini's Warm Breath Shambhala Publications

"[A] brilliant disquisition on . . . mostly unpublished texts for three allied systems of tantric thought and praxis (sexual, alchemical, and hatha yogic)." —*The Journal of Asian Studies*
The Alchemical Body excavates and centers within its Indian context the lost tradition of the medieval Siddhas. Working from previously unexplored alchemical sources, David Gordon White demonstrates for the first time that the medieval disciplines of Hindu alchemy and hatha yoga were practiced by one and the same people, and that they can be understood only when viewed together. White opens the way to a new and more comprehensive understanding of medieval Indian mysticism, within the broader context of south Asian Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam. "White proves a skillful guide in disentangling historical and theoretical complexities that have thus far bedeviled the study of these influential aspects of medieval Indian culture." —*Yoga World*
"Anyone seriously interested in finding out more about authentic tantra, original hatha yoga, embodied liberation . . . sacred sexuality, paranormal abilities, healing, and of course alchemy will find White's extraordinary book as fascinating as any Tom Clancy thriller." —Georg Feuerstein, *Yoga Journal*
"Remarkable . . . a study of the language of mystic experience and expression—the multitudinous symbols, rituals, and doctrines of the medieval siddhis, yogis, and alchemists." —*Skeptic Meditations*

Religious Approaches to Death

University of Chicago Press

The Ocean of the Heart contains all of your emotions. The ocean that you come across many times in your life, see yourself in this book at different situations with different emotions.

The Roots of Tantra Oxford University Press

Scholar Jeffrey J. Kripal explores the life and teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a 19th-century Bengali saint who played a major role in the creation of modern Hinduism. The work is now marked by both critical acclaim and cross-cultural controversy. In a substantial new Preface to this second edition, Kripal answers his critics and addresses the controversy.

Religions of Tibet in Practice Princeton University Press

An accessible and authoritative study of

the history, rituals, and sacred texts of Tantra, as well as its place in the modern world. Tantra occupies a unique position in Western understandings of Hindu spirituality. Its carnal dimension has made its name instantly recognizable, but this popular fascination with sex has obscured its philosophical depth and ritual practices, to say nothing of its overall importance to Hinduism. This book offers a clear, well-grounded overview of Tantra that offers substantial new insights for scholars and practitioners. André Padoux opens by detailing the history of Tantra, beginning with its origins, founding texts, and major beliefs. The second part of the book delves more deeply into key concepts relating to the tantric body, mysticism, sex, mantras, sacred geography, and iconography, while the final part considers the practice of Tantra today, both in India and in the West. The result is an authoritative account of Tantra's history and present place in the world. Praise for *The Hindu Tantric World* "Padoux has long been recognized as one of the most important scholars of Tantra in the world. He is universally recognized in the field as one of the most reliable and erudite guides to

this complex, controversial, and often misrepresented tradition. In *The Hindu Tantric World*, Padoux presents an accessible, clear, and up-to-date introduction to the topic that demonstrates his mastery of the primary materials and his decades of scholarship." —Hugh Urban, Ohio State University "For the past forty years, Padoux has been on the cutting edge of Tantric studies worldwide. *The Hindu Tantric World* is quite simply the most comprehensive and accessible overview of Hindu Tantra ever written and the culmination of a lifetime of outstanding achievement." —David Gordon White, University of California, Santa Barbara "The *Hindu Tantric World* presents a refreshingly critical, balanced, and concise survey of the field. Doyen of Hindu Tantric studies, Padoux translates the fruits of his decades of specialized research into an elegant and useful guidebook that helpfully situates these traditions within the broader fabric of South Asian religious culture. Nowhere else can a general readership find such an accessible and state-of-the-art treatment of the histories, theories, and practices of Tantric Hinduism." —Christian K.

Wedemeyer, University of Chicago
Advanced Spiritual Intimacy Oxford University Press

Since the 1960s, yoga has become a billion-dollar industry in the West, attracting housewives and hipsters, New Agers and the old-aged. But our modern conception of yoga derives much from nineteenth-century European spirituality, and the true story of yoga's origins in South Asia is far richer, stranger, and more entertaining than most of us realize. To uncover this history, David Gordon White focuses on yoga's practitioners. Combing through millennia of South Asia's vast and diverse literature, he discovers that yogis are usually portrayed as wonder-workers or sorcerers who use their dangerous supernatural abilities—which can include raising the dead, possession, and levitation—to acquire power, wealth, and sexual gratification. As White shows, even those yogis who aren't downright villainous bear little resemblance to Western assumptions about them. At turns rollicking and sophisticated, *Sinister Yogis* tears down the image of yogis as detached, contemplative teachers, finally placing them in their proper context.