

Tantra Sex Secrecy Politics And Power In The Study Of Religions

The Church of Scientology Hugh B. Urban 2013-02-24

Scientology's long and complex journey to recognition as a religion. Scientology is one of the wealthiest and most powerful new religions to emerge in the past century. To its detractors, L. Ron Hubbard's space-age mysticism is a moneymaking scam and sinister brainwashing cult. But to its adherents, it is humanity's brightest hope. Few religious movements have been subject to public scrutiny like Scientology, yet much of what is written about the church is sensationalist and inaccurate. Here for the first time is the story of Scientology's protracted and turbulent journey to recognition as a religion in the postwar American landscape. Hugh Urban tells the real story of Scientology from its cold war-era beginnings in the 1950s to its prominence today as the religion of Hollywood's celebrity elite. Urban paints a vivid portrait of Hubbard, the enigmatic founder who once commanded his own private fleet and an intelligence apparatus rivaling that of the U.S. government. One FBI agent described him as "a mental case," but to his followers he is the man who "solved the riddle of the human mind." Urban details Scientology's decades-long war with the IRS, which ended with the church winning tax-exempt status as a religion; the rancorous cult wars of the 1970s and 1980s; as well as the latest challenges confronting Scientology, from attacks by the Internet group Anonymous to the church's efforts to suppress the online dissemination of its esoteric teachings. The Church of Scientology demonstrates how Scientology has reflected the broader anxieties and obsessions of postwar America, and raises profound questions about how religion is defined and who gets to define it.

New Age, Neopagan, and New Religious Movements Hugh B.

Urban 2015-09-15 "New Age, Neopagan, and New Religious Movements is a comprehensive and user-friendly book devoted to the study of alternative spiritual currents in modern America. The book covers a wide range of new religions from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, including the Native American Church, Mormonism, Spiritualism, Scientology, the Nation of Islam, Rastafari, ISKCON, Wicca, the Church of Satan, Peoples Temple, Branch Davidians, and the Raelians. Each chapter focuses on one key issue or debate that raises larger issues in the study of religion and American culture more broadly, such as the legality of peyote in the Native American Church, the role of women and feminism in Wicca, the role of hip hop and reggae music in the spread of the Nation of Islam and Rastafari, and the debate over human cloning in the Raelian movement. The book also addresses key theoretical and methodological problems in the study of new religions: Why has there been such a tremendous proliferation of new spiritual forms in the past 150 years, even amid our increasingly rational, scientific, technological, and 'secular' society? Why has the United States become the heartland for the explosion of new religious movements? How do we deal with complex legal debates such as the use of peyote by the Native American Church, the use of marijuana by Rastafarians, or the practice of plural marriage by some Mormon communities? And how do we navigate issues of religious freedom and privacy in a new age of religious violence, terrorism, and government surveillance?"--Provided by publisher.

Pilgrimage and Politics in Colonial Bengal Imma Ramos
2017-03-16 Reviving Sati's corpse: Mother India tours and Hindutva in the twenty-first century -- Bibliography -- Index
The Ethnography of Tantra Carola E. Lorea 2023-11-01 This is the first collection of essays to approach the topic of Tantric Studies from the vantage point of ethnography and lived religion, moving beyond the centrality of written texts and giving voice to the everyday life and livelihoods of a multitude of Tantric actors.

Bringing together a team of international scholars whose contributions range across diverse communities and traditions in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Himalayan region, the book connects distant shores of Tantric scholarship and lived Tantric practices. The contributors unpack Tantra's relationship to the body, ritual performance, sexuality, secrecy, power hierarchies, death, magic, and healing, while doing so with vigilant sensitivity to decolonization and the ethics of fieldwork. Through diverse ethnographies of Tantra and attention to lived experiences and life stories, the book challenges normative definitions of Tantra and maps the variety of Tantric traditions, providing comparative perspectives on Tantric societies across regions and religious backgrounds. The accessible tone of the ethnographic case studies makes this an ideal book for undergraduate or graduate audiences working on the topic of Tantra.

Magic and Witchery in the Modern West Shai Feraro 2019-06-26

This book marks twenty years since the publication of Professor Ronald Hutton's *The Triumph of the Moon*, a major contribution to the historical study of Wicca. Building on and celebrating Hutton's pioneering work, the chapters in this volume explore a range of modern magical, occult, and Pagan groups active in Western nations. Each contributor is a specialist in the study of modern Paganism and occultism, although differ in their embrace of historical, anthropological, and psychological perspectives. Chapters examine not only the history of Wicca, the largest and best-known form of modern Paganism, but also modern Pagan environmentalist and anti-nuclear activism, the Pagan interpretation of fairy folklore, and the contemporary 'Traditional Witchcraft' phenomenon.

India and the Occult G. Djurdjevic 2014-05-21 India and the Occult explores the reception of Indian spirituality among Western occultists through case studies. Rather than focusing on the activities of Theosophical Society, *India and the Occult* looks at the 'hard-core' occultism, in particular the British 20th century

currents associated with Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune, Kenneth Grant, etc.

Fictional Practice: Magic, Narration, and the Power of

Imagination 2021-09-27 Tying on case studies from late antiquity to the 21st century, this is the first volume that systematically explores the inter-relationship between fictional narratives about magic and the real-world ritual art of practicing magicians.

Thematizations of the Goddess in South Asian Cinema Anway

Mukhopadhyay 2022-11-16 This collection presents cross-disciplinary explorations of the tropes, themes and representational frameworks constellating around the figure of the Goddess in South Asian cinema. It critically approaches the Goddess theme in various genres of South Asian cinema, using analytical tools culled from gender studies, comparative cultural studies, and religious studies, as well as film semiotics. The films discussed here represent variegated thematizations of the Goddess across regions in South Asia, including Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and various geo-cultural locations in India. As the volume highlights the regional and politico-cultural differences and commonalities in representational schemes between South Asian films of different genres through the Goddess motif, it will appeal to scholars of film studies, South Asian studies and comparative religion, and will hold a special appeal for those interested in Goddess cultures and theology.

Transhumanism David Livingstone 2015-09-02 Transhumanism is a recent movement that extols man's right to shape his own evolution, by maximizing the use of scientific technologies, to enhance human physical and intellectual potential. While the name is new, the idea has long been a popular theme of science fiction, featured in such films as 2001: A Space Odyssey, Blade Runner, the Terminator series, and more recently, The Matrix, Limitless, Her and Transcendence. However, as its adherents hint at in their own publications, transhumanism is an occult project,

rooted in Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, and derived from the Kabbalah, which asserts that humanity is evolving intellectually, towards a point in time when man will become God. Modeled on the medieval legend of the Golem and Frankenstein, they believe man will be able to create life itself, in the form of living machines, or artificial intelligence. Spearheaded by the Cybernetics Group, the project resulted in both the development of the modern computer and MK-Ultra, the CIA's "mind-control" program. MK-Ultra promoted the "mind-expanding" potential of psychedelic drugs, to shape the counterculture of the 1960s, based on the notion that the shamans of ancient times used psychoactive substances, equated with the "apple" of the Tree of Knowledge. And, as revealed in the movie *Lucy*, through the use of "smart drugs," and what transhumanists call "mind uploading," man will be able to merge with the Internet, which is envisioned as the end-point of Kabbalistic evolution, the formation of a collective consciousness, or Global Brain. That awaited moment is what Ray Kurzweil, a director of engineering at Google, refers to as The Singularity. By accumulating the total of human knowledge, and providing access to every aspect of human activity, the Internet will supposedly achieve omniscience, becoming the "God" of occultism, or the Masonic All-Seeing Eye of the reverse side of the American dollar bill.

Gendered Ways of Transnational Un-Belonging from a Comparative Literature Perspective Indrani Mukherjee

2019-05-03 As the outcome of an international conference held at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, this book provides a collection of productive texts on, and novel critical approaches to, comparative literature for young scholars. The wide range of analytical approaches employed here allow for the opening up of texts to new readings. The contributions here encompass readings of cinema, advertisements and literary representations, such as novels, poems and short stories, and are pertinent for scholars in media studies, cultural studies, gender studies,

sociology and literature. As a commentary on contemporary representations of gender, the book is also relevant for all higher education institutions which seek to heighten gender sensitivity.

Beating Tantra at Its Own Game Arthur Lytle 2002-09 Tantra introduces a middle path, extending the male and female physical relations.

Tantra Hugh B. Urban 2012 Bhadriraju Krishnamurti (1928) is Professor and Head of the department of Linguistics at Osmania University, Hyderabad. He received a B.A. (Hons.) Degree (1948) in Telugu language and literature at Andhra University Waltair and an M.A. (1955) and Ph.D. (1957) in linguistics from the university of Pennsylvania U.S.A.

Global Tantra Julian Strube 2022 "Beyond introducing the subject matter and critically surveying the state of scholarship, this introduction offers a substantial theoretical and methodological elucidation of the book's approach that is also relevant for readers not strictly interested in the specialized subject.

Combining perspectives from religious studies, global history, South Asian studies, and the study of esotericism, the foundations of global religious history are discussed both in abstraction and in light of the source material. This especially considers historiographical challenges such as (post)colonialism, Eurocentrism, or Orientalism, as well as issues such as the blurry meaning of "global connections" and differentiations between the global, regional, and local. Leading themes such as the contested meaning of tradition, revival, reform, and modernity are scrutinized, as are the relationship and meanings of religion, science, esotericism, and nationalism that remain the subject of scholarly debate. Global religious history makes proposals for resolving such debates by eliding disciplinary boundaries"--

Transformations and Transfer of Tantra in Asia and Beyond

István Keul 2012-01-27 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.

Introducing Hinduism Hillary P. Rodrigues 2023-01-06

Introducing Hinduism, 2nd Edition is the ideal sourcebook for those seeking a comprehensive overview of the Hindu tradition. This second edition includes substantial treatments of Tantra, South India, and women, as well as expanded discussions of yoga, Vedanta and contemporary configurations of Hinduism in the West. Its lively presentation features: case studies, photographs, and scenarios that invite the reader into the lived world of Hinduism; introductory summaries, key points, discussion questions, and recommended reading lists at the end of each chapter; narrative summaries of the great epics and other renowned Hindu myths and lucid explanations of complex Indian philosophical teachings, including Sankhya and Kashmir Saivism; and a glossary, timeline, and pronunciation guide for an enhanced learning experience. This volume is an invaluable resource for students in need of an introduction to the key tenets and diverse practice of Hinduism, past and present.

Negotiating Rites Ute Hüsken 2012 Ritual has been long viewed as an undisputed and indisputable part of (especially religious) tradition, performed over and over in the same ways: stable in form, meaningless, preconceived, and with the aim of creating harmony and enabling a tradition's survival. The authors represented in this collection argue, however, that this view can be seriously challenged and that ritual's embeddedness in negotiation processes is one of its central features.

Advanced Spiritual Intimacy Stuart Sovatsky 2014-05-14 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.

Tantra, Magic, and Vernacular Religions in Monsoon Asia

Andrea Acri 2022-11-03 This book explores the cross- and trans-cultural dialectic between Tantra and intersecting 'magical' and 'shamanic' practices associated with vernacular religions across Monsoon Asia. With a chronological frame going from the mediaeval Indic period up to the present, a wide geographical framework, and through the dialogue between various disciplines, it presents a coherent enquiry shedding light on practices and practitioners that have been frequently alienated in the elitist discourse of mainstream Indic religions and equally overlooked by modern scholarship. The book addresses three desiderata in the field of Tantric Studies: it fills a gap in the historical modelling of Tantra; it extends the geographical parameters of Tantra to the vast, yet culturally interlinked, socio-geographical construct of Monsoon Asia; it explores Tantra as an interface between the Sanskritic elite and the folk, the vernacular, the magical, and the shamanic, thereby revisiting the intellectual and historically fallacious divide between cosmopolitan Sanskritic and vernacular local. The book offers a highly innovative contribution to the field of Tantric Studies and, more generally, South and Southeast Asian religions, by breaking traditional disciplinary boundaries. Its variety of disciplinary approaches makes it attractive to both the textual/diachronic and ethnographic/synchronic dimensions. It will be of interest to specialist and non-specialist academic readers, including scholars and students of South Asian religions, mainly Hinduism and Buddhism, Tantric traditions, and Southeast Asian religions, as well as Asian and global folk religion, shamanism, and magic.

Unforgetting Chaitanya Varuni Bhatia 2017 Religion in decline in an age of progress -- Untidy realms -- A Swadeshi Chaitanya -- Recovering Bishnupriya's loss -- Utopia and a birthplace.

Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious

Movements Eileen Barker 2016-04-08 New Religious Movements

tend to start their lives with a number of unequivocal statements, not only of a theological nature but also about the world and appropriate behaviours for the believer. Yet these apparently inalienable Truths and their interpretations frequently become revised, 'adjusted' or selectively adopted by different believers. This book explores different ways in which, as NRMs develop, stagnate, fade away, or abruptly cease to exist, certain orthodoxies and practices have, for one reason or another, been dropped or radically altered. Sometimes such changes are adapted by only a section of the movement, resulting in schism. Of particular concern are processes that might lead to violent and/or anti-social behaviour. As part of the Ashgate/Inform series, and in the spirit of the Inform Seminars, this book approaches its topic from a wide range of perspectives. Contributors include academics, current and former members of NRMs, and members of 'cult-watching' movements. All the contributions are of a scholarly rather than a polemic nature, and brought together by Eileen Barker, the founder of Inform.

Magia Sexualis Hugh B. Urban 2006-10-04 "This book offers a fascinating account of the development of Western sexual magic through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Urban focuses on an extraordinary set of historical figures, and his rich analysis illuminates the sexual—and supernatural—undercurrents that have shaped modernity."—Randall Styers, author of *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World*

The Allure of Decadent Thinking Carl Olson 2013-03-07 The use of postmodern thought to approach the study of religion threatens to call into question the values and representational mode of thinking typical of the field. Religious studies with a radical scepticism grounded in an embrace of decadence by postmodern thinkers has the potential to undermine, subvert, and distort the study of religion, making it difficult to understand the subject if such an approach is uncritically adopted by scholars seeking new ways to study it.

The Bloomsbury Companion to Hindu Studies Jessica Frazier
2014-01-16 Originally published as The Continuum Companion to Hindu Studies, this Companion offers the definitive guide to Hinduism and study in this area. Now available in paperback, The Bloomsbury Companion to Hindu Studies covers all the most pressing and important themes and categories in the field - areas that have continued to attract interest historically as well as topics that have emerged more recently as active areas of research. Specially commissioned essays from an international team of experts reveal where important work continues to be done in the field and, valuably, how the various topics intersect through detailed reading paths. Featuring a series of indispensable research tools, including a detailed list of resources, chronology and diagrams summarizing content, this is the essential tool for anyone working in Hindu Studies.

The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism Catherine Wessinger
2016-07 'The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism' offers readers an in-depth look at both the theoretical underpinnings of the study of millennialism and its many manifestations across history and cultures.

Secrecy Hugh B. Urban 2021-01-12 The powers of political secrecy and social spectacle have been taken to surreal extremes recently. Witness the twin terrors of a president who refuses to disclose dealings with foreign powers while the private data of ordinary citizens is stolen and marketed in order to manipulate consumer preferences and voting outcomes. We have become accustomed to thinking about secrecy in political terms and personal privacy terms. In this bracing, new work, Hugh Urban wants us to focus these same powers of observation on the role of secrecy in religion. With *Secrecy*, Urban investigates several revealing instances of the power of secrecy in religion, including nineteenth-century Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the sexual magic of a Russian-born Parisian mystic; the white supremacist BrüderSchweigen or “Silent Brotherhood” movement of the

1980s, the Five Percenters, and the Church of Scientology. An electrifying read, *Secrecy* is the culmination of decades of Urban's reflections on a vexed, ever-present subject.

Making a Mantra Ellen Gough 2021-10-11 Jainism originated in India and shares some features with Buddhism and Hinduism, but it is a distinct tradition with its own key texts, art, rituals, beliefs, and history. One important way it has often been distinguished from Buddhism and Hinduism is through the highly contested category of Tantra: Jainism, unlike the others, does not contain a tantric path to liberation. But in *Making a Mantra*, historian of religions Ellen Gough refines and challenges our understanding of Tantra by looking at the development over two millennia of a Jain incantation, or mantra, that evolved from an auspicious invocation in a second-century text into a key component of mendicant initiations and meditations that continue to this day. Typically, Jainism is characterized as a celibate, ascetic path to liberation in which one destroys karma through austerities, while the tantric path to liberation is characterized as embracing the pleasures of the material world, requiring the ritual use of mantras to destroy karma. Gough, however, argues that asceticism and Tantra should not be viewed in opposition to one another. She does so by showing that Jains perform "tantric" rituals of initiation and meditation on mantras and maṇḍalas. Jainism includes kinds of tantric practices, Gough provocatively argues, because tantric practices are a logical extension of the ascetic path to liberation.

When a Goddess Dies Oriane Aymard 2014 Using numerous interviews and extensive research, this book explores the devotional movement of the enduring religious figure, Anandamayi Ma, venerated both as a guru and an incarnation of the Divine on Earth. Oriane Aymard asks what happens to a charismatic movement after the death (mahasamadhi) of the guru.

Encountering Kali Rachel Fell McDermott 2005 *Encountering Kali*

explores one of the most remarkable divinities the world has seen. The Hindu goddess Kali is simultaneously understood as a blood thirsty warrior a deity of ritual possession a tantric sexual partner and an all loving compassionate mother. Popular and scholarly interest in her has been on the rise in the west in recent years. Responding to this phenomenon McDermott and Kripal's volume focuses on the complexities involved in interpreting Kali in both her indigenous south Asian settings and her more recent Western incarnation. Through the shifting lenses of scriptural history temple architecture political reflection and the goddess's recent guises on the Internet the contributors pose questions that illuminate our understanding of Kali while addressing the problems and promises inherent in every act of cross cultural interpretation.

Heaven's Gate George D. Chryssides 2016-12-05 On March 26, 1997, the bodies of 39 men and women were found in an opulent mansion outside San Diego, all victims of a mass suicide. Messages left by the Heaven's Gate group indicate that they believed they were stepping out of their 'physical containers' in order to ascend to a UFO that was arriving in the wake of the Hale-Bopp comet. The Heaven's Gate suicides were part of a series of major incidents involving New Religions in the 1990s, as the new millennium approached. Despite the major attention that Heaven's Gate attracted at the time of the suicides, there have been relatively few scholarly studies. This anthology on Heaven's Gate includes a combination of articles previously published in academic journals, some new writings from experts in the field, and some original Heaven's Gate documents. All the material is expertly brought together under the editorship of George D. Chryssides.

Occult Roots of Religious Studies Yves Mühlematter
2021-06-08 The historiographers of religious studies have written the history of this discipline primarily as a rationalization of ideological, most prominently theological and phenomenological

ideas: first through the establishment of comparative, philological and sociological methods and secondly through the demand for intentional neutrality. This interpretation caused important roots in occult-esoteric traditions to be repressed. This process of "purification" (Latour) is not to be equated with the origin of the academic studies. De facto, the elimination of idealistic theories took time and only happened later. One example concerning the early entanglement is Tibetology, where many researchers and respected chair holders were influenced by theosophical ideas or were even members of the Theosophical Society. Similarly, the emergence of comparatistics cannot be understood without taking into account perennialist ideas of esoteric provenance, which hold that all religions have a common origin. In this perspective, it is not only the history of religious studies which must be revisited, but also the partial shaping of religious studies by these traditions, insofar as it saw itself as a counter-model to occult ideas.

The Tantric Alchemist Peter Levenda 2015-09-01 The *Tantric Alchemist* is a work on alchemy as decoded by Tantra and a work on Tantra as understood by alchemists. It uncovers works by Thomas Vaughan and suggests how he and his wife--a 17th-century Welsh couple unique in the history of western alchemy--met their fate when dealing with forces they knew only too well, but which were stronger than their ability to control them. Using the works of Vaughan as his text, Levenda applies the "twilight language" of Tantra to the surreal prose of the alchemist and in the process lays bare the lineaments of the arcane tradition that gave rise to the legend of Christian Rosenkreutz, the reputed founder of Rosicrucianism who learned his art in the East; and to the 19th- and 20th-century occult movements lead by such luminaries as P.B. Randolph, Theodore Reuss, Helena Blavatsky, and Aleister Crowley who also sought (and discovered) this technology in the religions and cultures of Asia. Readers will find that the many disparate threads of an authentic spiritual tradition

are woven together here in a startling tapestry that reveals--without pretense or euphemism--the psycho-sexual technique that is at the root of both Tantra and alchemy: that is to say, of both Asian and European forms of esoteric praxis.

The Hindu Tantric World André Padoux 2017-03-07 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.

The Jewish Encounter with Hinduism Alon Goshen-Gottstein 2017-08-01 Hinduism has become a vital 'other' for Judaism over the past decades. The book surveys the history of the relationship from historical to contemporary times, from travellers to religious leadership. It explores the potential enrichment for Jewish theology and spirituality, as well as the challenges for Jewish identity.

The Power of Tantra Hugh B. Urban 2009-10-30 In the West, the varied body of texts and traditions known as Tantra for more than two centuries has had the capacity to scandalize and shock. For European colonizers, Orientalist scholars and Christian missionaries of the Victorian era, Tantra was generally seen as the most degenerate and depraved example of the worst tendencies of the so-called 'Indian mind': a pathological mixture of sensuality and religion that prompted the decline of modern

Hinduism. Yet for most contemporary New Age and popular writers, Tantra is celebrated as a much-needed affirmation of physical pleasure and sex: indeed as a 'cult of ecstasy' to counter the perceived hypocritical prudery of many Westerners. In recent years, Tantra has become the focus of a still larger cultural and political debate. In the eyes of many Hindus, much of the western literature on Tantra represents a form of neo-colonialism, which continues to portray India as an exotic, erotic, hyper-sexualized Orient. Which, then, is the 'real' Tantra? Focusing on one of the oldest and most important Tantric traditions, based in Assam, northeast India, Hugh B Urban shows that Tantra is less about optimal sexual pleasure than about harnessing the divine power of the goddess that flows alike through the cosmos, the human body and political society. In a fresh and vital contribution to the field, the author suggests that the 'real' meaning of Tantra lies in helping us rethink not just the history of Indian religions, but also our own modern obsessions with power, sex and the invidious legacies of cultural imperialism.

Indian Asceticism Carl Olson 2015 Throughout the history of Indian religions, the ascetic figure is most closely identified with power. A by-product of the ascetic path, power is displayed in the ability to fly, walk on water or through dense objects, read minds, discern the former lives of others, see into the future, harm others, or simply levitate one's body. These tales give rise to questions about how power and violence are related to the phenomenon of play. Indian Asceticism focuses on the powers exhibited by ascetics of India from ancient to modern time. Carl Olson discusses the erotic, the demonic, the comic, and the miraculous forms of play and their connections to power and violence. He focuses on Hinduism, but evidence is also presented from Buddhism and Jainism, suggesting that the subject matter of this book pervades India's major indigenous religious traditions. The book includes a look at the extent to which findings in cognitive science can add to our understanding of these various

powers; Olson argues that violence is built into the practice of the ascetic. Indian Asceticism culminates with an attempt to rethink the nature of power in a way that does justice to the literary evidence from Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sources.

An Indian Tantric Tradition and Its Modern Global Revival

D.E. Osto 2020-03-06 This book analyzes the contemporary global revival of Nondual Śaivism, a thousand-year-old medieval Hindu religious philosophy. Providing a historical overview of the seminal people and groups responsible for the revival, the book compares the tradition's medieval Indian origins to modern forms, which are situated within distinctively contemporary religious, economic and technological contexts. The author bridges the current gap in the literature between "insider" (emic) and "outsider" (etic) perspectives by examining modern Nondual Śaivism from multiple standpoints as both a critical scholar of religion and an empathetic participant-observer. The book explores modern Nondual Śaivism in relation to recent scholarly debates concerning the legitimacy of New Age consumptive spirituality, the global spiritual marketplace and the contemporary culture of narcissism. It also analyzes the dark side of the revived tradition, and investigates contemporary teachers accused of sexual abuse and illegal financial activities in relation to unique features of Nondual Śaivism's theosophy and modern scholarship on new religious movements (NRMs) and cults. This book shows that, although Kashmir Śaivism has been adopted by certain teachers and groups to market their own brand of "High Tantra," some contemporary practitioners have remained true to the system's fundamental tenets and teach authentic (albeit modern) forms of Nondual Śaivism. This book will be of interest to academics in the fields of religion and Asian philosophies, especially South Asian, tantric, neo-tantric and yoga philosophies, alternative and New Age spiritualities, religion and consumerism, and NRMs and cults. Winner of the inaugural 2021 New Zealand Asia Society Book Award, second prize.

Songs of Ecstasy Hugh B. Urban 2001 This book offers the first English translation of a body of highly esoteric, mystical poetry and songs associated with the Khartabhajas, a Bengali sect devoted to Tantrism. The period from the late 18th to the early 19th century, during which these lyrics were written, was an era of change, experimentation, and transition from the older medieval styles to the new literary forms of "modern" Bengal. The highly original songs presented here are an important part of this transitional period, reflecting the search for new literary forms and experimentation in new poetic styles.

Religion, Language, and the Human Mind Paul Anthony Chilton 2018 Religion is a multi-faceted and complex human phenomenon, combining many different mental and social characteristics. Among these, language plays a crucial though often neglected role. This volume brings together groundbreaking work from linguistics, cognitive science and neuroscience, as well as from religious studies, in order to illuminate the origins and centrality of religion in human life.

Teaching Mysticism William Barclay Parsons 2011-12-16 The term "mysticism" has never been consistently defined or employed, either in religious traditions or in academic discourse. The essays in this volume offer ways of defining what mysticism is, as well as methods for grappling with its complexity in a classroom. This volume addresses the diverse literature surrounding mysticism in four interrelated parts. The first part includes essays on the tradition and context of mysticism, devoted to drawing out and examining the mystical element in many religious traditions. The second part engages traditions and religio-cultural strands in which "mysticism" is linked to other terms, such as shamanism, esotericism, and Gnosticism. The volume's third part focuses on methodological strategies for defining "mysticism," with respect to varying social spaces. The final essays show how contemporary social issues and movements have impacted the meaning, study, and pedagogy of

mysticism. Teaching Mysticism presents pedagogical reflections on how best to communicate mysticism from a variety of institutional spaces. It surveys the broad range of meanings of mysticism, its utilization in the traditions, the theories and methods that have been used to understand it, and provides critical insight into the resulting controversies.

The Participatory Turn Jorge N. Ferrer 2008-12-04 Cuts through traditional debates to argue that religious phenomena are cocreated by human cognition and a generative spiritual power.

Tantra Sex Secrecy Politics And Power In The Study Of Religions

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finding the best eBook that aligns with your interests and needs is crucial. This article delves into the art of finding the perfect eBook and explores the platforms and strategies to ensure an enriching reading experience.

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