
David Gordon White (ed.), *Tantra in Practice*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, first Indian edition, 2001, XVIII + 640 Pp. Rs. 495 (first edition, UK, 2000).

Tantra in Practice is the eighth volume of Princeton Readings in Religions. It is dedicated to the Tantric traditions of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Islam in Asia. The volume is a collection of articles written by thirty-nine contributors from several countries, among them distinguished specialists in the field of Tantra. Their contributions are arranged according to specific subjects, but to make their use easier three tables of contents are arranged according to the seven main subjects, then according to the four religions and finally according to countries, namely China, India, Japan, Nepal and Tibet.

An introductory chapter, written by the editor, is preceded by a short Preface by Donald Lopez, Jr., a note on transliteration and information concerning contributors. At the end of the book the reader will find a glossary of foreign terms and a general index.

In the Introduction the editor presents the main subjects of discussion. After considering the question of the possibility of mapping Tantra, definitions of the principal Tantric phenomena (maṇḍala, initiation, yoga, sexual practices) he examines some historical data concerning the appearance of Tantric features in the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions; he also considers the problem of the direction of influences. The problem of the participants of the Tantric world ('Tantric Actors') is presented with special stress on the role of royal Tantra and present-day position of Tantra practitioners. The Introduction is provided with a bibliography of the most important secondary sources.

Every article contained in the seven sections concerning particular subjects is based on or supplemented by a passage from a particular relevant Tantric text, very often presented to the broader audience for the first time. It is also provided with rich bibliographical information of the relevant primary and secondary sources.

The first section, entitled *Gurus and Adepts*, contains five articles dealing with the following: the guru in Indian context, with a passage from the *Kulārnavatantra* (André Padoux); the tradition of the Buddhist siddhas, with a passage from the Tibetan *Garland of Gems* (Matthew T. Kapstein); the cult of skulls in Bengali folk Tantra based on interviews with a Kālī priest (June McDaniel); features of Kāpālika practice with a passage of the farce *Mattavilāsa* (David N. Lorenzen); trance healing sessions performed by the healer Mātājī with the description of a particular session (Kathleen M. Erndl).

The second section, entitled *Kings and Priests*, contains three articles. The first deals with the Tantric tradition of the Japanese Buddhist Kūkai and the rite for consecration of place as described in two documents from Kūkai's *Shōryōshū* (David L. Gardiner); the second with the Śaiva Mattamayūra tradition with a translation of a relevant inscription (Richard H. Davis); and the third with the precepts for royal initiation in the Japanese Shingon tradition as presented in the *Heizei tennō kanjōbun* (Allan G. Grapard).

The third section, *Devotees and Deities*, concerns the Bengali tradition of songs composed to the black goddess Kālī with a translation of poetry devoted to her (Rachel Fell McDermott); the wedding of Śiva with the goddess as described in the *Kulālikāmnāya* (Teun Goudriaan); the goddess Taleju worshipped in the Kathmandu Valley with a translation of the Sarvāparādhastotra of King Pratāpamalla preserved in an inscription (Bronwen Bledsoe); Tantric features in Andal's poetry with translations from the *Tiruppāvai* and *Nācciyār Tirumoli* (D. Dennis Hudson).

The fourth section, *Traditions in Transition and Conflict*, concerns Tantric features in Jainism with a translation of a passage from the *Kharataragacchāpattāvalīsamgraha* (Paul Dundas); possession of Dakinis with a translation of an abridgment of the Tibetan text *The Luminous Web of Precious Visions* (David Germano and Janet Gyatso); the Gujarati text of the *Āgama Prakāśa* with the translation of a portion of it (Robin Rinehart and Tony K. Stewart); Tantric features in Islam presented with translations from *The Conversation between Guru Hasan Kabīruddīn and Jogī Kaniphā* (Dominique-Sila Khan).

The fifth section, *Tantric Paths*, contains articles concerning Tantric features within medieval Japanese Zen with a translation of the initiation document *Kūjinsho kirikami* (William Bodiford); the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā tradition of Bengal with a translation of a passage from *The Necklace of Immortality* (Glen A. Hayes); the Mantra path as seen in the Tibetan *Outline of the Jewel Mound of Instructions* (Yael Bentor); the Kaula tradition as seen in the *Kulārṇava Tantra* (Douglas Renfrew Brooks); Chinese Tantric ritual as presented in *Ritual of the Secret Dhāraṇīs of the Three Siddhis for the Destruction of Hell, the Transformation of Karmic Hindrances, and the Liberation from the Three*

Conditioned Worlds (Fabio Rambelli).

The sixth section, *Rites and Techniques*, contains articles on Chinese Tantric speculations concerning the stars with a translation of a passage from *The Scripture Expounded by the Buddha on Prolonging Life through Worship of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper* (Charles D. Orzech and James H. Sanford); Tibetan good ritual of giving up one's body with a translation from the *Great Collection of the Teachings* (Giacomella Orofino); Jain Tantric practices with the translation from *Ghaṇṭākarna Mantra Stotra* (John E. Cort); Tantric yantras in Hindu temples with a translation from the *Śilpa Prakāśa* (Michael D. Rabe); magical practices, mainly "the six rites" (*ṣaṭkarmāṇi*) with a translation from the *Mantramahodadhi* (Gudrun Bühnemann); the cult of Kālī as described in the *Toḍala Tantra* (Sanjukta Gupta); the homa ritual in the Japanese Shingon tradition with a translation from the *Monju Soku Sai Goma Shiki Shidai* (Richard K. Payne); the purification of the body of the devotee in the Pāñcarātra tradition with a translation from the *Jāyākhyasamhitā* (Gavin Flood).

The seventh section, *Yoga and Meditation*, contains articles on the Tibetan tradition of meditation with a translation from the *dBu ma lta ba'ikhrid yig* (Donald S. Lopez, Jr.); the Japanese Tantric tradition of Tachikawa-ryuu and Ryoobu Shintoo with a translation from *Ise shōsho Nihongi yūshiki honshō nin denki* (Bernard Faure); the Tibetan Great Completeness tradition with a translation from the *Essential Heart of the Great Expanse* (Ann Carolyn Klein); Abhinavagupta's poem *Anubhavanivedanastotra* (Paul Muller-Ortega); the Vajrayāna tradition of Buddhism with a translation from the *Vimalaprabhā* (John Newman); Tantric traces in meditative practice in Jainism with the translation from *Yogaśāstra* (Olle Qvarnström); and Tantric teachings about death with a translation from the Tibetan translation of Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Teaching on Cheating Death* (Michael Walter).

This volume of Princeton Readings in Religions is an original contribution to the study of Tantra, a subject which is becoming one of the important fields in Indology, facilitated by access to new, previously unknown sources. One of the values of this book is that it gives access to many sources previously untranslated. These articles from a broad range of contributors working on Tantra in many regions of Asia provide a rare opportunity to recognize and compare the different kinds of Tantric tradition and Tantric features within other traditions such as Islam or Jainism. Of course, due to limitations of space, we are given only short passages from the sources used, but their selection enables the reader to gain some sense of the richness and diversity of the Tantric sources and traditions in Asia. Yet another valuable feature of this anthology is the fact that it presents subjects and relevant texts belonging to both premodern and modern periods. This enables the reader to see Tantra in its continuity and change. Also of value is the fact that many of the articles are concerned with Tantra's connection with royalty and its folk variants, thus enabling us to see important aspects of its social context.

This clearly introduced and thematically well-ordered anthology of articles with samples from a wide variety of sources will be of value both to Indologists and other Asianists, and to the lay reader interested in phenomenon of Tantra,

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giving him access to the work of specialists and providing him with bibliographical information for further reading.

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