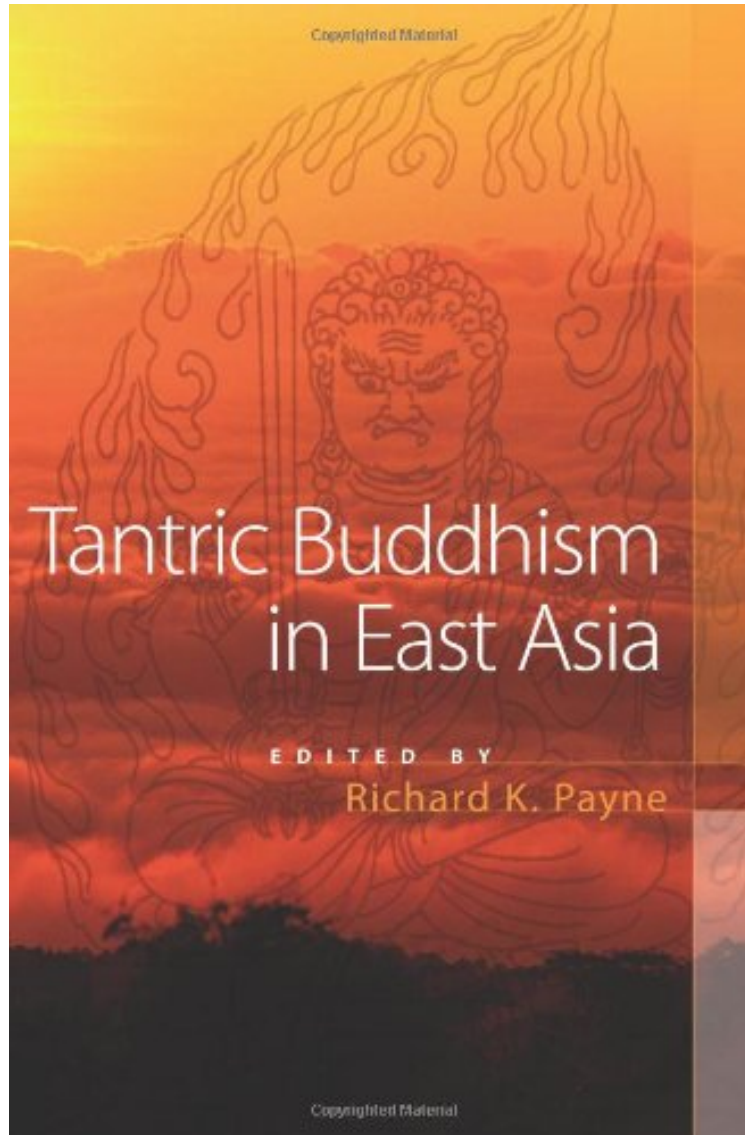


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Tantric Buddhism in East Asia

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From Brand: Wisdom Publications : Tantric Buddhism in East Asia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tantric Buddhism in East Asia:

18 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Tantric Buddhism in East Asia By Mysterium Ineffable "Tantric Buddhism in East Asia" is a welcome collection of essays on Vajrayana Buddhism and the many guises it takes in East Asia. As a casual reader of Buddhist texts I found it to be most enjoyable and recommend it as an introduction to the general climate of what has come to be known in the West as "tantric" Buddhism. The collection is edited by Richard

Payne, a Western scholar of religion who happens to be an ordained Shingon priest; though you wouldn't know this from reading his introductory essay. It has some merit, but the author seems excessively spooked by what he sees as orientalist authoritarianism which mire classic Buddhist studies in the West. Without doubt modern philosophical currents shaped the study of Buddhism in the West and continues to do so for the most part to this day. Unfortunately Payne fails to see any "authoritarianism" in his thoroughly "Western academic" approach to the study Buddhism. As far as the essays are concerned it would be hard to single out the most important essays because they are all quite diverse and important in their own right. Those which appealed to me were James Stanford's "Breath of Life: The Esoteric Nembutsu", H. Byron Earhart's "Shugendo, the Traditions of En no Gyoja and Mikkyo Influence", Henrick Sorensen's "Esoteric Buddhism in Korea", Hisao Inagaki's "Kukai's 'Principle of Attaining Buddhahood with the Present Body'", and Ian Astley's "The Five Mysteries of Vajrasattva: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Passions and Enlightenment". I especially enjoyed the essay on Shugendo, a topic so rare in studies of Japanese religion, yet one of the most interesting for me personally because of its synthesis of Mikkyo and the indigenous mountain asceticism (sangaku shinko) of Japan. What makes this collection valuable is the scarcity of quality introductions to Vajrayana outside of the well-known Tibetan tradition and the extreme difficulty one finds in accessing the inner logic of Vajrayana, or more popularly "tantric" Buddhism. The essays here are by and large introductory yet scholarly rigorous and, in the case of Korean Esoteric Buddhism, the first of their kind that I've seen. This field is still opening up as interest in Vajrayana increases and as the prejudices which saw in Vajrayana a falling away from the purity of the "original Dharma" begin themselves to fall away. 15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Fine Collection of Fine Articles By Crazy Fox Don't let the slightly New Age look of the cover fool you. This book consists of a number of articles all of high scholarly calibre. Except for the editor's introduction (which includes an interesting if slightly nitpicky consideration of the category "tantric" and other relevant terms), these articles have appeared before, but scattered in more or less inaccessible sources. To have them all easily available together here is a real godsend (so to speak). Also, and perhaps accidentally, a good balance is struck between studies of the esoteric tradition in its classical, clearly formulated aspect and explorations of its interaction and osmosis with other Buddhist traditions. By the way, the articles are: 1. Tantrism in China (Chou Yi-Liang) 2. Esoteric Buddhism in Korea (Henrik H. Sorensen) 3. On Esoteric Practices in Korean Son Buddhism during the Choson Period (Henrik H. Sorensen) 4. Kukai's "Principle of Attaining Buddhahood with the Present Body" (Hisao Inagaki) 5. The Five Mysteries of Vajrasattva: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Passions and Enlightenment (Ian Astley) 6. An Annotated Translation of the Pancabhisambodhi Practice of the Tattvasamgraha (Dale Todaro) 7. The Twelve-Armed Deity Daisho Kongo and His Scriptural Sources (Pol Vanden Broucke) 8. Breath of Life: The Esoteric Nembutsu (James H. Sanford) 9. Shugendo, the Traditions of En no Gyoja, and Mikkyo Influence (H. Byron Earhart) 10. The Cave and the Womb World (Helen Hardacre)

While the tantric Buddhism found in the Indian and Tibetan traditions is increasingly recognized, in East Asia tantric Buddhism remains largely unknown. This collection brings together twelve key essays on tantric Buddhism in East Asia, drawn from sources that are not commonly available. The collection is organized into four sections: China and Korea, Japan, Deities and Practices, and Influences on Japanese Religion. Payne's work, which brings together in one place a "critical mass" of scholarship, will create a sea change in the understanding of the history of East Asian Buddhism and Tantra.

About the Author Richard K. Payne is Dean and Yehan Numata Professor of Japanese Buddhist Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California. A member of the doctoral faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, he is also a collaborating researcher with the Open Research Center for the Humanities, Science, and Religion at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan. He is an ordained Shingon Buddhist priest.