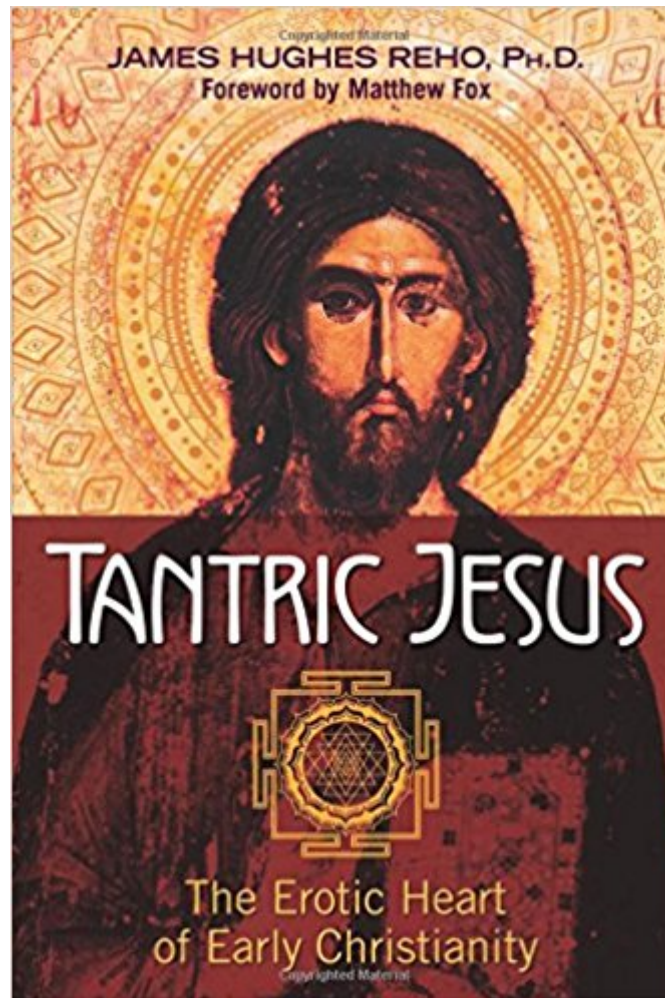




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Tantric Jesus: The Erotic Heart Of Early Christianity



Synopsis

A guide to the history and modern practice of transformative Christianity Reveals the original tantric wisdom of Jesus and the early Church and its resonance with the tantric yogas of India and Tibet Explains how tantric Christianity views the human body as the primary “temple” of the Holy and erotic energy as the signature of indwelling Divine Presence Provides step-by-step instructions for a series of Christian tantric practices, including a partnered sexual practice, mantra and energy work, eye gazing, and work with icons Unbeknownst to many, the original Christian spirituality as practiced in the early church and by Jesus himself was a tantric spirituality. In the West, Tantra often evokes images of arcane rituals or acrobatic sexual positions, while in reality Tantra is a holistic transformative path of life, love, and being--grounded in practice. Offering a new understanding of Jesus as guru and master of left-handed Tantra, James Reho, an Episcopal priest and tantric initiate, reframes the Christian story and restores to modern Christianity the tantric wisdom practices that were edited out of church tradition and forgotten over the centuries. He explains how tantric Christianity views the human body as the primary “temple” of the Holy, with erotic energy as the signature of Divine Presence within. Rev. Reho reveals the similarities of the earliest Christian practices to the tantric yogas of India and Tibet and explores the role of Kundalini and the chakras. He details how to work with mantras, icons, and pranayama breathing exercises, as well as with gazing as a spiritual practice. Informed by the insights of ancient texts and early masters of Christian spirituality, the author provides step-by-step instructions on how to practice Christian tantric sex with a life-partner of the opposite or same sex. Rev. Reho reveals how these heart-opening practices are rooted in eros, the life of deep desire, expressive of God’s grace within us, and are still alive in monastic practices in the Christian East. Integrating his personal spiritual experiences, years of study of ancient Christian mysticism, and an expertise in yoga and tantra, the author shows how we can re-engage the original truths of the early church to affirm the body as a holy vehicle and to utilize the energy of the erotic to achieve ecstatic union with the Divine.

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Customer Reviews

“James Reho brings out hitherto unrealized parallels between the tantric mode of the East and Christian practice in the West. The heavenly and the earthly come together in this fascinating book. As a Christian, I am richer for having read it.” (The Rev. Robert Corin Morris, D.D., Episcopal priest and founder of Interweave, Inc)

“Episcopal priest Reho peels back the Platonic influence on Christianity to uncover a radical rearticulation of spiritual practice in this engrossing guide. . . . the work beautifully serves any Christ follower seeking concrete, simple suggestions for body-based spiritual practice.” (Publishers Weekly)

“This is a book for our times. Deeply feminist in nature, it offers the hope of freeing Western men and women from the limitations of a sterile understanding of Christ and Christianity. This freedom is essential if we are going to heal the divisions in humanity and heal our planet from the ravages of dualistic exploitation. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in exploring their personal experience of Christ.” (Mary Ann Whalen, LCSW, psychotherapist)

“James Reho is truly on to something here. Please read this book. You will understand the great Christ yogi in a new and powerful way. You will make real use of the peace and power Jesus brought to human life.” (Mark Whitwell, author of *Yoga of Heart* and *The Promise*)

“James Reho calls us into the marriage of East and West, the conjoining of Heaven and Earth, the pregnancy of spirit and matter. Tantric Jesus is a courageous call into the frightening and freeing world of oneness.” (John Philip Newell, author of *The Rebirthing of God*)

“I welcome Tantric Jesus for its potential deep implications for the future of Christianity in dialog with Eastern spirituality. . . . James Reho helps point us in the right direction, one in which our consciousness can be raised higher, richer, and fuller as a result of a conscious and knowledgeable dialogue between the Mystery of Christ and the living tradition of Tantra through the erotic spiritual process of holy longing.” (Russill Paul, author of *Jesus in the Lotus: The Mystical Doorway Between Christianity*)

“As an Episcopal priest and a yogi, James Reho is a bridge between cultures and spiritual traditions. Tantric Jesus, his insightful and skillful first book, likewise bridges mind and

spirit, theory and practice, erudition and accessibility, passion and rationality, the sacred masculine and the sacred feminine. The book is revolutionary without losing heart.~ (Christian de la Huerta, teacher, speaker, and author of Coming Out Spiritually)~ "A brilliantly written and tremendously inspiring treatise on Tantra. A complete revelation!~ (Diana Richardson, author of The Heart of Tantric Sex)~ "For anyone who is longing to be transformed by the divine energies present in all of creation and the cosmos, Tantric Jesus is required reading, a sound and reliable guide for all who are traveling along the perilous but grace-filled path to the Heart of the Divine.~ (The Rev. Peter Savastano, Ph.D.)~ "With scholarship as thorough as its topic is controversial, Tantric Jesus infuses the traditions of Christianity with the embodied practices of Hindu Tantra. . . . Do the practices in this book, and your understanding of the historical Jesus and the path of Christianity will never be the same.~ (Will Johnson, author of Breathing Through the Whole Body and Eyes Wide Open)

The Reverend James Hughes Reho, Ph.D., is an ordained Episcopal priest with a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Princeton University. He has served on the staff of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Miami, as the Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Formation at the General Theological Seminary in New York City, and currently pastors a Lutheran-Episcopal church in Fort Myers, Florida. A spiritual director and certified yoga instructor, he leads retreats and workshops on yoga, meditation, and tantric practice in both religious and secular settings. He lives in southwest Florida with his wife.

Beautiful!!! Loved it!

I feel the need to comment in response to the reviewer named RP. This book may not be your cup of tea, but you have no authority to say that this is biblical fiction. In fact, James is a theological scholar and has been studying scripture since he was a boy. He learned Ancient Greek so he could read original texts and understand their interpretation from a 1st century perspective. He is a highly educated Episcopal priest and knows his scripture. He has degrees in Christian theology, Eastern religion, and philosophy. He has read literally hundreds of books on Christianity and other faiths. When we close our minds immediately to something other than what we're used to, we are closing possibilities for growth and learning.

As a person whose spiritual journey includes the Eastern and Western, I was curious to see what JHR had to say on this topic. The first half of the book is organized according to five "roots", basic

premises that can be found in Tantrism and Christianity, while the second half focuses on practices. Over all, I think the premises are a sound basis for comparison and the practices very spiritually beautiful. What I found difficult was the "blending" of traditions as if religious/spiritual terms were interchangeable. While there is overlap in belief systems and language can never fully capture the Divine Mystery, there are distinctions that make each Sacred Tradition unique and most relevant to the people who were conditioned in that tradition. Hindu understanding and experience, for example, growing up a Hindu in India can never be truly the same as a Westerner converting to Hinduism as an adult and living a western life. Along the same lines, as Raimon Panikkar, a Catholic priest involved in interfaith dialogue and whose father was a Hindu Brahmin, pointed out: Christ is not the same as an avatar or an enlightened being, devas and asuras are not the same as angels and demons. In other words, while it is true that as we get deeper in our spirituality, one starts to see more the universalities within the various religious traditions rather than the differences, one should be mindful and respectful of these distinctions. Otherwise, concepts will get blurred and misinterpreted in translation. I am sure that JHR is a very qualified individual in his subject areas, but there were several instances where this occurred. The words "real", "illusion" and "kundalini" come to mind. In terms of interfaith dialogue, I was much more impressed and moved by Bede Griffiths' *River of Passion* and *A New Vision of Reality*, but I certainly appreciate the author's experience and attempt to correlate within the two traditions.

The authors knowledge and insights allowed me to understand the divinity of Jesus in a new way. He refers to the great thinker Pelagius, to remind us that: "It is not what we believe that matters; it is how we respond with our heart and our actions. It is not believing in Christ that matters; it is becoming like Him." He also sheds light on the guru-disciple relationship, which I never fully understood, clarifying that traditionally, the disciples' submission to the guru helps them break their addiction with the ego and pride, by no longer identifying with it. In order to fully absorb much of what the author reveals, I often paused to dispel preconceived concepts that have been transmitted throughout the centuries. For example, in the prevalent cultural context, we assume that 'knowledge' exists independent of its source, in other words, we're not concerned with where it came from, the source is secondary. Tantra, however, makes a clear distinction between information and knowledge. Knowledge can only be transmitted through a concrete relationship. Hence Tantra views 'the Christian path' not as a doctrine we need to learn about, but rather as a relationship we need to deepen and become more intimate with, so we may embody the qualities and become more like him. Personally, I feel a deeper communion with the divine when I'm

surrounded by the majestic beauty of the wilderness, deeply present, using all the senses, than I am when I attend mass, struggling to hear a priest in the distance, amidst the echoes of a microphone, and heads that impair my vision and hearing, let alone the clamor and whispers of people surrounding me. Tantric Jesus is an eye-opening book that illuminates the roots of Tantra, affirming our engagement in social justice and the power of eros as a gateway to dwell with all of creation in the divine heart of Jesus. Tantric Jesus: The Erotic Heart of Early Christianity

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