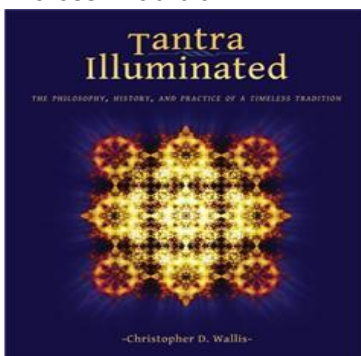


Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy, History, and Practice of a Timeless Tradition By Christopher D. Wallis  
Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition A lot more than I ever wanted to know about Tantra written by the author totally passionate about the topic.  
Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition Christopher Wallis' certainly delivers on the promise of its subtitle and his passion for the material is evident. However the work suffers from the modern Western preoccupation with repeatedly assuring the reader that all this talk of Gods and Goddess is primarily to be understood as philosophical metaphor. While the parts of the story of Tantra that Wallis chooses to emphasize are often heroically thorough his failure to meaningfully explore Tantra's folk traditions/practices left me feeling like something crucial is missing. I have many takeaways most prominent are that all desire is ultimately a desire for the divine which explains why attempting to satisfy it with material things is ultimately unsatisfactory. Also good to know was that originally the only sex related to tantra had to do with a small aspect about overcoming aversion so could more easily have forgiveness and compassion for all beings. Another is that we all go through cycles of expansion and contraction where we can expand our self definition loving more of creation or contract refine and limit our scope of entanglement. Here are a few select quotes: When you see yourself clearly there comes a flash of recognition: you are a microcosmic expression of precisely the same divine powers that create maintain and dissolve this whole universe. When you experientially realize that the same beautiful and awesome powers that orchestrate the intricate and wondrous display of this entire creation are flowing within you creating you even as you create with them providing the very foundation of your whole experience of reality there is a profound shift. An explosion of joy accompanies the realization that there is nothing to do nothing to achieve other than to fully embrace the divine powers that seek to manifest through you by expressing the entirety of your authentic being in the fullness of each moment in an endless flow of such moments. This is the state of *pūrṇo'ham vimarsā* which can be translated several ways: "the perfect 'I'-consciousness" or "the awareness 'I am full and complete'" or "the awareness 'the real I encompasses everything'". Just as the mass of any object accelerated to the speed of light increases to infinity in the same way when the ego reaches the state of complete expansion it merges into the ocean of Consciousness. The work of the spiritual practitioner then is to first release her judgments concerning her own desires judgments that cause a contraction of Consciousness and secondly to merge her limited desire into the greater pattern of divine Will. What the Goddess wants is simply to flow in relational patterns of ever-greater harmony and we naturally fall into that dance when our conditioned desires that arise from a false sense of lack have fallen away. But this cannot happen as long as we are judging or condemning them instead of seeing that they are the same energy as divine Will constrained by our ignorance from expressing themselves in maximum harmony. strongest grade of *śaktipāta* is so powerful it brings about immediate liberation a fierce and total awakening with the unfortunate side effect that the intensity of the experience causes the body to drop (i. When this intuitive knowledge arises if it rapidly grows to completion of its own accord the recipient is said to be a "Self-revealed guru" a giver of both enjoyment and liberation displaying the six signs of completion. Depending on the steadiness or shakiness of one's intuition Abhinava says one must perform self-refinement through the sacred vow of disciplined yoga practice either by himself or as directed by a guru. In the recipient of the third grade the burning questions "What is the Truth? Who knows that Truth?" lead one through intuition or the company of spiritual friends to develop the longing to meet a master (Tantrāloka 13. The fourth grade of *śaktipāta* leads a person to take initiation though his perception of the divinity of his real Self is not as firm as a third-grade recipient because it is difficult for him to break through his conditioned convictions and mental constructs of reality. (By "the path" I do mean to imply that there is really only one path of spiritual transformation regardless of what name it is given or which religion or culture it is articulated within. These grades are not given much attention in the texts but it is important to note here that what grade of *śaktipāta* you receive is not due to how "worthy" you are but to how intense your longing for awakening is in relation to your longing to enjoy "the good life. Now if for example mine is "I'm so stupid" I might think the antidote is "I'm actually really smart!" Unfortunately such a

feeble rejoinder will not be successful in displacing an impure thought-form that has taken deep root and plagued you for years. For example instead of "I'm actually really smart" I might say "The divine intelligence that created this whole universe dwells within me as me and by contacting it I can understand anything I truly need to know in this life. " We realized it had to be authentic for her so we modified the statement to "I am a manifestation of the Divine Mother in the process of realizing and embodying my true nature. Then you might take the ultimate challenge: go to the mirror and look yourself right in the eye and repeat your súddha-vikalpa no matter how silly you feel until you get past the point of feeling silly. ")From Tantra Illuminated by Christopher Wallis Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition A revelation This book is a masterful example of the author's self-proclaimed scholar/practitioner model. Highly recommend this book!! Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition Profound scholarly and based on personal experience this book is a guide to discovering the very roots of our soul. It explains the mystery of nondual Saiva Tantra without diminishing it; it leads me gently to a comprehension of this ancient teaching at the same time it encourages my participation in the journey. It acknowledges key questions many of us have about the meaning of God in our lives and provides a grounding for the answers within the research and the personal experiences of the author. If you are interested in yoga in questions like why was I born?; in learning more about living a spiritual life and what that entails; in gaining clarity about previously fuzzy ideas about yoga and what it is then read this book. Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition Tantra Illuminated is the most accurate comprehensive and accessible portrayal of the Shaiva tradition by any modern scholar. com Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition Tantra Illuminated is a relevant and beautiful work of the heart and should be a companion resource for any student of yoga Tantra Sanskrit Indian philosophy or history. This book is for those interested in learning more about the topic (you can stay close to the surface or go deep) as well as for scholars who are well versed in Shaiva Tantra—there is an incredible amount of knowledge and wisdom within! I purchased both the audio and print versions and suggest listening to the recording first letting it wash over you so you can enjoy the resonance of Christopher's voice as he reads chants (divine!) and pronounces Sanskrit words and phrases with utter perfection then delving deeper into study and contemplation in the print format. A dense read for someone unfamiliar with many Hindu words still I liked it a lot I will be coming back to it again as I continue on this new journey :) Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition



Tantra Illuminated takes the reader on a fascinating journey to the very heart of Tantra: its key teachings foundational lineages and transformative practices. Since the West's discovery of Tantra 100 years ago there has been considerable fascination speculation and more than a little misinformation about this spiritual movement: Now for the first time in the English language Tantra Illuminated presents an accessible introduction to this sacred tradition that began 1500 years ago in the far north of India. Translated from primary Sanskrit sources and offering a profound look at spiritual practice this book reveals Tantra's rich history and powerful teachings: Tantra Illuminated:

The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition The Illustrations are just amazing. Ekabhumi is a dear friend of mine and a fantastic artist, I found the book to be informative and easy to read my only issue with it was that I found it slightly preachy. Read the book if you want realistic not new agey/commercial account of it, Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition This is my favorite book on Tantra ever written: I listened to it while home with my baby and it lifted me to sublime levels while I was changing diapers and pacing around my house. Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition Excellent possibly best spiritual book I've ever read: Another good one was that when making a positive version of a negative statement have to integrate the divine to make it more powerful. Your fear and pettiness drop away as you harmoniously fall into the dance of life energy realizing that you have been the only one who has ever limited your potential: Many spiritual traditions view the ego as an enemy on the spiritual path because its voice seems opposite to the voice of God our innermost Self. However in the Tantrik tradition an enemy is simply an ally viewed in the wrong way. Thus the ego is not to be annihilated in Tantrik yoga but rather purified and infinitely expanded, Since the ego simply means "what you think you are" expanding it means expanding your sense of self including more and more in your self-definition: Ultimately when the ego expands infinitely you experience all things in yourself and yourself in all things, When you experience all beings as part of yourself you naturally act with compassion and wisdom. From the perspective of the Śrī-vidyā desire (icchā) is the motive force of the universe since without it nothing would arise and divine Consciousness would remain static. This does not mean giving up desire but rather learning to want passionately what the Goddess wants which necessitates becoming one with Her: The second grade also very rare causes a spontaneous arising of intuitive insight naturally leading to full awakening, On the other hand if the intuitive insight is unsteady or incomplete then s/he will need the scriptures and a teacher to confirm and strengthen it, The third grade is much more common and is the weakest grade of śaktipāta that still permits one to attain liberation in the same lifetime: One who has received it experiences a strong desire to approach a true guru and has the intuition necessary to recognize such a teacher, If this desire is strong enough says Abhinava the longing will inevitably be fulfilled: Having met such a master attainment of insight into things as they are follows rapidly culminating in living liberation, Nonetheless through the gradual ripening of his insight through practice the fourth-grade recipient merges with the Divine upon leaving the body: This and the following grades account for the majority of people on the path. ) The fifth and sixth grades are received by those who are ready for the spiritual life but who also have a strong desire for worldly enjoyment and prosperity: They thus seek and find a teacher who can support them in both endeavors, They practice a yoga that leads them to enjoyment and then to liberation at the time of leaving the body or shortly thereafter, The three lowest grades of śaktipāta are received by one whose desire for enjoyments is stronger than for liberation. These grades of awakening grant one access to the path to enjoyment through yoga culminating in liberation in a future life, " Though the latter is described as the we believe the self-image that we see the world in such a way that confirms our view, When we ask ourselves "Would I rather be happy or right?" we take a leap of faith. If we wait for enough "evidence" to come in before changing our self-image we will wait forever and grow old and petrified in our views in the meantime, So identify one of your negative self-messages now and compose an antidote for it as Abhinava suggests, As Abhinava teaches the new purified thought-form 1) must be very powerful and 2) must terminate in the ultimate Reality, The only way to make it do that is to take it all the way to God, " Now that's something with power that I can work with and it is a vikalpa that can take me beyond itself which if you recall is one definition of a śuddhavikalpa: If you succeed in finding a true antidote to your negative self-message you will know because you will probably be uncomfortable repeating it. You might feel silly saying it or you might start to cry: A student of mine when working with this technique identified the negative self-message of "I'm a bad mother, " When she came up with the feeble antidote of "I'm a good mother" I challenged her to root her śuddha-vikalpa in God. She said "I am a manifestation of the Divine Mother" and burst into tears. " You might try something similar so that it challenges you but also rings true for you: (If the

mirror doesn't work for you you could try using a loved one as your "mirror. It is a beautifully written combination of history and philosophy infused with a radiant spirit -- an energetic signature that can be felt while reading the text. I've been a seeker for a long time and this book incredibly encapsulates and synthesizes what I have intuited in my heart but have been unable to express: Christopher Wallis renders the sould of the Tantrik masters with profound intuition and academic poise. This is a book you can visit and revisit as it calls to you: Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition Really gave me some new ways of looking at spirituality life and myself. And it's not a pun. Tantra is not what you think and what I thought. OMG I love this book. There are no more boundaries to selfhood." It is the state of complete all-inclusive expansion.e. physical death). Needless to say this is extremely rare.222). Then she said "But I don't really believe it. You may be amazed at what happens. It is absolutely fascinating well written and very moving. This book is such a gift.Christopher Tompkinswww.shaivayoga