

“The Buddhist Tantras is an excellent and clear presentation of the historical development, contents, and dissemination of Buddhist tantras across Asia. While demonstrating a command of the relevant sources, Gray has succeeded in making a complex material accessible to a broad variety of readers. Those teaching courses on Buddhist tantras will find this book to be an essential course reading.”

Vensa A. Wallace, Professor of South Asian and Inner Asian Religious Traditions, University of California, Santa Barbara

The tantric Buddhist traditions emerged in India beginning in the seventh century CE and flourished there until the demise of Buddhism in India circa the fifteenth century. The central scriptures for these traditions were generally designated by the term *tantra*. Tantras are works that purport to relate secret teachings of the buddhas that enable awakening in as short as one lifetime. As such they are understood by their advocates to be the inspired speech of a buddha, and hence worthy of inclusion in the canons of Buddhist traditions. This volume provides a detailed introduction to the Buddhist tantras by exploring their key teachings as well as the history of their interpretation and their connection to traditions of ritual and contemplative practices.

It also introduces the classification of the tantras and their place in Buddhist scriptural canons. It suggests their transgressive rhetoric and practices served an important role in Buddhist tantric traditions, which may be why they persist despite the challenges they have presented to the dissemination of these traditions.

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