## The Ethnography of Tantra

Textures and Contexts of Living Tantric Traditions

## FID SOZIAL- UND KULTURANTHROPOLOGIE in Zusammenarbeit mit der DFG

Edited by

CAROLA E. LOREA AND ROHIT SINGH



## Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
Acknowledgments	xiii
Introduction: Rethinking Tantra through Ethnography Carola E. Lorea and Rohit Singh	1
Part I: On Materiality and Mediation: Lived Practices of Texts, Objects, and Media	
Chapter 1 An Ethnography of Tantra in the Western Himalayas: The Material Substance of Practical Rituals <i>William S. Sax</i>	61
Chapter 2 Observing Participation, Transgressing Hermeneutics: Bali's Tantric Script Practices and the Limits of Participant Observation Annette Hornbacher	87
Chapter 3 The Conch as a Tantric Artifact: Metaphysics of a Number and the Twirled Lives of Text and Practice Sukanya Sarbadhikary	111

Chapter 4 WhatsApp Bagalāmukhī! Social Life and Experiences of a Tantric Goddess Sravana Borkataky-Varma	137
Part II: Embodiment, Identity, and Experience: Conversations with Tantric Livelihoods	
Chapter 5 Folk Tantra and Healing: An Ethnography of Traditional Healers in the Darjeeling Hills and Sikkim Jarrod Hyam	165
Chapter 6 Songs for <i>Siddhi</i> : An Ethnographic Analysis of Bāul Fakiri Sādhanā Keith Edward Cantú	191
Chapter 7 Serving the Divine Element in Humans: Everyday (Tantric) Vaișnavism and What Begging Means to Bāuls <i>Kristin Hanssen</i>	219
Part III: Institutions and Individuals in the Making of Tantric Traditions: To Be or Become Tantric	
Chapter 8 The Cremation Ground, the Battlefield, and the Path of Compassion; or, What Makes the Fabric of an Individual's Tantric Encounter? <i>Nike-Ann Schröder</i>	243
Chapter 9 The Spectrum of Eclecticism and Conservatism within Kerala's Tantric Traditions: A Case Study of Meppat Sampradāya <i>Maciej Karasinski</i>	269

Chapter 10	
Tantric Lives in Bengal and Bali: Toward a Comparative Ethnography June McDaniel	297
Afterword Geoffrey Samuel	327
List of Contributors	351
Index	357