

# *The Tantra Exhibition, and Forty Years On*

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In September 1971 an exhibition opened at the Hayward Gallery in London on *Tantra, the Indian cult of Ecstasy*. The catalogue for the exhibition produced as a book by Philip Rawson the curator, is often still available on Ebay and it wasn't hard to get hold of the poster there. For the 40p admission price, which also covered an art exhibition the 36,000 people who attended could see Tibetan *thankas*, statues, stones and objects from the ancient world of tantra. The catalogue included a long explanation of tantric cosmology and of course the exhibition included some of the eighteenth century paintings of couples entwined in improbable sexual positions. Forty years ago most people probably hadn't heard of tantra. I didn't hear of the exhibition; I was too busy settling in to life as a first year physics undergraduate in London but I had probably vaguely heard of tantra and was interested in anything which combined a positive approach to sexuality with spirituality; the addition of an all-encompassing cosmology was the icing on the cake! This was the beginning of the seventies and Woodstock and the summer of love was a very recent memory for some; not alas me; I was slightly too young and from conservative, rural Worcestershire.

Then internet didn't exist in 1971 but putting the word "tantra" into Google today produces over 24 million results. It has become the hobby of pop stars and on many parts of the internet, something that looks rather like porn and sexual services. It seems that tantra has come from the obscure preserve of oriental scholars to a lifestyle accessory or a selling point in the great spiritual/cultural shopping mall of the internet. Is this a cause for celebration or mourning? A much harder question is; *What the hell is tantra?*

There are dictionaries which will tell you that it is a rather disreputable and disowned branch of Hindu spirituality and then you are told that all Tibetan Buddhism is tantric. There are innumerable internet sites that seem to link tantra to endurance tests of sexual performance or as a way to enhance your love life; or as a form of therapy and there are books on tantra where there is no mention of sex even in the index. There are thousands of books available; and yet you may be told that you have to have a guru you are devoted to and it is a secret oral tradition. You may be told that the word simply means "practices" and the tantras are simply compilations of methods of meditation. It can seem very obscure and small; and then you are told that all yoga is a part of tantra. Grasping tantra is rather like trying to get hold of soap in the bath; just when you think you have it in your grasp it slips away and you are left groping around again in the murky water.

The exhibition catalogue was clear; tantra is a cosmology; a way of understanding the whole universe and every aspect of life. The objects in the exhibition attempted to illustrate this from an oval smooth stone representing the universe to an explanation of time as understood in tantra.

There were pictures of ferocious deities, garlands of skulls around their necks and many arms, beautiful statues. There was lovemaking and sweet couples, usually with servants, coupled outdoors.

Tantra seems to be both complex in its ancient origins and current forms and at the same time surely there is somewhere simplicity of what it is about. To my mind comes the image of tree; many roots under the ground and many branches overhead but only one simple solid trunk. The danger with tantra is that we make it what we want, or fear it to be; and words lose their meanings in a postmodern soup of desires and fears.

## Roots

It would be natural to think of tantra as something Indian, a sort of spiritual curry that has now grown all over the world because it was ready for export. However, one of the claims of tantra is as a cosmology; another is that the human body contains a sort of map, in the energy lines, meridians and chakras, for spiritual advancement. This means that although tantra may have reached a form in India which endured in the culture it is actually present throughout the world in all ancient cultures.

India has always presented the West with an impenetrable jungle of beliefs, practices, deities and groups and scholars have attempted to create neat categories like "Hindu" as if it is a religion like being a Baptist. In tantra they have attempted to divide tantra into Right hand path and Left hand path, Red tantra, White tantra and Black tantra. All such divisions ultimately collapse in the chaos of real lives and practices and the exotic "rainforest" of Indian life.

If tantra is not just from India, then what and where is the tantra of Britain? The next time you see a pub called "The Green Man" this is the remnants of the British Shiva, the Divine Masculine God in the form of the Ivy King the god who presided over half of the hunting cycle of the year originating before settled agriculture. Tantra is about fertility and abundance and for ancient people finding meaning and even more importantly finding food. Robin Hood is another remnant of the Green Man in British legend going back to before the time of settled agriculture. We have piles of stone like Stonehenge with its connections to the solstice and the cycling of the stars and the year; and perhaps in Avebury the coming together of the masculine and feminine along the two lines of stones. Think for a moment of the typical English village scene; the village green with its maypole and children dancing around weaving their ribbons around the pole passing under and over each other. The word "tantra" comes from two Sanskrit words which are associated with weaving.



Mayday comes after the night of Beltane when lust youths and girls went off in to the woods... any child conceived that night was a child of village. The Maypole does not symbolise the phallus; that was Freud's reductive mistake, the erect phallus is a particular example of the lingam the symbol of Shiva the divine masculine principal of the universe. Also on the village green are the Morris Dancers with bells and staves invoking fertility and

the masculine power (as well as looking absurd!) . In Britain we are left with quaint customs, the occasional head of the green man high up in a church and a sense of pagan history that is mostly lost. Much modern paganism is a reinvention in the late nineteenth century coupled with a Goddess spirituality that often owes as much to feminism as to history.

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In India, Hindu is a word that comes from the river Indus and is simply the beliefs of those who lived beyond that River. Scholars are divided over whether there ever was an Aryan invasion of India from the North but undoubtedly in the South of India, the area which is now Tamil Nadu, the almost black Dravidian people have the most ancient traditions of tantra. Ethnically, they are connected to the Australian Aboriginals from the time when there was a land bridge between India and Australia; about 60,000 BCE. The temples of Tamil Nadu are a powerful reminder of this and remnants of lost temples under the sea were exposed after the tsunami in 2004. The connection to aboriginal culture is a reminder that tantra arises from our ancient, original embeddedness in Nature.

A European example of this is the prehistoric cave paintings of southern France where you can see in a painting called shaman with animal and sexual symbolism. Shamans used their power to stalk nature and animals to hunt and gain the animal powers. One of the few modern tantra books



by an Indian is subtitled “seducing the forces of matter and nature”. Tantra has shamanistic roots, and part of shamanism is becoming the power animal; in tantra we become the god or goddess; shapeshifting to our true nature. The rhythms of the moon and the stars and the cycles of nature and of the human body were all that ancient people had to study. They found in this the secret of life in sexual reproduction

of animals, plants and humans and mostly used this to transition from hunter-gather to agriculture. As it was obvious that “everything was born of woman” the feminine was revered above all else. The miracle of producing babies and milk from the body was awesome and the Mother Goddess would be revered along with others. Versions of this theme can be found in all cultures becoming more or less hidden according to various later overlays of patriarchal institutions.



Medieval alchemy is a European remnant of tantra. The alchemical quest was not ultimately to turn base metal into gold but to turn the ego of the ordinary person into the gold of the Soul. In the Czech Republic in a 13<sup>th</sup> century alchemist’s house I saw in the basement the fire and the retorts and glass tubes and walking up a spiral staircase to the top of the house is the octagonal room where the alchemist meditated. On the stairs are pictures of the human body with chakras, energy centres along the mid-line of the body. The house itself is in the same plan as the chakra map of the human body with the fires of sexuality in the basement of the pelvis and the chamber of spiritual insight in the skull. It was a spiritual quest. Isaac Newton wrote more on alchemy than he did on physics much of it almost impossible to decipher. Eventually alchemy became chemistry and the gold now sought is the drug companys’ next patent to cure our ills.

European tantric mysteries came from Egyptian mystery schools and the little understood symbolism of the ank via Greek myths, counterparts to the Indian Gods and Goddesses into other European and middle Eastern mystery traditions. Within Judaism, the Tree of Life of the Kabbalah is a map which connects to the Indian



chakra map but many of the practices, other than visualisations have been lost or are kept so secret by Jewish Kabbalistic practitioners that they are not revealed. All of this was not lost from the early Christian world and the Gospel of Thomas contains some excellent quotes such as; "*When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer and the outer as the inner and the above as the below, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female not be female . . . then shall you enter the kingdom.*".

Early Christians may not have been very concerned with sexuality, a subject of which Christ seems to have said virtually nothing (unlike many present Christians!) as they felt that the world was about to end and they had other more pressing concerns. With Christianity's adoption by the patriarchal and militaristic Roman state any mystical and sexual elements were buried. Behind recent fascination with the fiction of the *Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown is a desire for the re-instatement of the feminine within Christianity. At last Christianity's belief that, the flesh is almost inevitably in league with the Devil, is waning. New Age spirituality is not necessarily much better; it is common to find the idea that this world is a place to leave as soon as possible; rising to a better place of disembodied ethereal spiritual beings in white.

The view of some branches of Christianity that sex is sinful has led to a church with no idea how to channel sexual energy as the Catholic Church in Ireland has found to its cost There have always been some elements hanging in there; the Church of England traditional marriage ceremony has the phrase "*With my body I thee worship*" in it! And so again, we inevitably come back to sex and the deep intuition on the part of some, particularly women that the body is sacred and a temple, a doorway to the divine and sexual bliss is a taste of the great bliss of heaven and a dissolving of the illusion of separation; if only for a moment. In the passion in the Song of Solomon it is unclear whether this is a woman singing about her lover or about God. The mystical traditions in all religions – inevitably at odds with the power structures of the church have always had a connection to tantra; usually without the sexual element being overt. Here is a picture by *Hildegard of Bingen* (12<sup>th</sup> century) , more famous for her sublime songs. You do not need to be a raging Freudian to see in this the shape of the vulva with clitoris at the top; and within the stars; the womb being the fertile void, which both creates and contains the universe.



The Sufi tradition, which probably predates Islam, but became associated with it in the Middle East, is in many ways the tantra of Islam. Its aim is the heartfelt mystical union with the divine portrayed in the poetry of *Rumi, Kabir and Hafiz* and its methods of centring in the heart include ecstatic prayer, and the slow dance, twirling around the central axis of the body to create a direct pathway to heaven with the human heart at the centre.

## **Trunk**

As tantra is not a "thing"; it is very hard to define. "Embodied spirituality" is as good a two word definition as you can get. In India the tantras are simply texts containing methods of spiritual

practice. The well-known *Vigyan Bhairava Tantra* probably written about 1,800 years ago but based on an oral tradition at least as old again is written as a dialogue between Shiva and Parvati in which she asks him for methods of spiritual practice. The text has 112 methods – of which three are connected with sex. Another text written at a similar time is the well-known *Karma Sutra* of Vatsyana. This has no connection with tantra at all but is simply a sex manual for rich Indian men to give them some idea of women and sexual performance. There is no explicit spiritual element or methods of working with consciousness. It is easy to confuse a sex-positive culture with tantra – confusion rife on the internet today. Probably the high point of tantric culture in India was about a thousand years ago.

In the Kashmir valley just before this time, a crossroads for travellers for thousands of years, practitioners who were also great scholars flourished for example Abinavagupta (850 CE) who wrote of tantra now called Kashmir Shavism with practises which, unlike much modern neo-tantra, put awareness as the central ground of all practise. Consciousness is everything and from the ground principal of consciousness, which is identified with Shiva; all phenomena arise.

In India, the Islamic invasion around thirteenth century became the first of several by rather puritanical colonisers who were aghast at the free culture, the tantric temples and rituals. The next invasion was Catholic Portuguese colonisers and finally of course the Puritan British. Eighteenth century accounts of tantra are replete with shock and indignation at these “Hindoos” and their unspeakable rituals. The tantriks fled to the forests and hills, temples were destroyed, and practices which were already rather hidden, mostly oral traditions or written in obscure “twilight” language; became even harder to find. In India tantra became known as connected to death and to black magic where it is still firmly located today. It is ironic that modern Indians may begin to learn about tantra from Western teachers. This is an example of what has been called “the pizza effect” whereby pizza in Italy comes from America where Italian immigrants developed it.

At no time has there ever been a singular tantric approach. Coming from ancient fertility the figure of a horned god sitting in meditation is on a Harapan seal of 5,000 BCE. In Tibet the traditional shamanistic Bon practices blended with the imported Buddhism from India into the traditions of tantric Buddhism found in Tibet and now thanks to the Chinese invasion, throughout the world. However, a book like *Introduction to Tantra* by Lama Yeshe has no reference to sex! When Western tantra, often called “neo-tantra” contains little else and practices in such neo-tantra books can seem like slow sex with deep breathing, candles and joss sticks. The Tibetan Buddhist practices we have in the West have come almost entirely from the monastic traditions of Tibet; the Dali Lama is a monk. Hence texts were translated and practices written down by celibate male monks who hid the sexual nature of many tantric practices; women and sex were written out of the equation leaving Tibetan tantric practices using elaborately visualised deities like Tara rather than flesh and blood women.

In China, tantra became connected closely to the Chinese medical system so Taoist practices cultivate the retention and circulation of sexual energy as practices to support a long healthy life. Within China in particular, the practices seem to have been written about in terms of men’s health until recently but now some of the women’s practices are becoming better known and used. Taoist practices connect with Tai Chi and with martial arts both in China and the Far East.

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Tantra has always been in the West in paganism, in the mystery traditions, in the hidden knowledge and in the esoteric understanding. Even the symbol of doctors in the British Medical Association logo, the caduceus, has the staff with entwined serpents ascending it and wings at the top if full of tantric symbolism to the ascent of the Kundalini energy up the central channel in the paths of ida and pingala, the sun and the moon. At the third eye in the middle of the forehead they unite and we spiritually fly. For tantra as a spiritual technology has had a deeply felt and studied knowledge of the human body with its both gross and subtle anatomy. For example female ejaculate; only acknowledged as existing in the last twenty years has been know about and used in tantric rituals for thousands of years. Historically in India yoga is part of tantra – the part to do with purifying the body, energising it and preparing a stable platform for meditation. *“Tantra is the mother and Yoga is the son”* , Swami Satyananda Saraswati the founder of the Bihar School of Yoga. Yoga in India has often been taught by the Vedantic Brahmins who were only really concerned with spiritual purity as the men at the top of the hierarchical male caste system. Tantra radically rejects this notion of pure and impure and of hierarchy. By the time yoga was brought to the West at the end of the nineteenth century it was being “sanitised” by Vivekananda and turned in to a branch of the health and fitness industry. In India the campaign against the *devadassi*, the female temple dancers, was run by Indians who were more puritan than the British.

## **Branches**

Some of the British in India were genuinely interested in studying Indian traditions and for tantra the Calcutta High Court judge, Sir John Woodruffe was the person who studied and practised and learnt of tantra, writing the only books on tantra from a Westerner respected by Indians under the name of Arthur Avalon.

In America, at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as a sanitised form of yoga coming from India, others were learning from Indian techniques. Alice Bunker Stockham, the first female doctor in America after travels in the East taught a technique called *karezza* a form of relaxed genital connection which led to a very different experience of sex and orgasm which modern neuroscience can begin to understand as a way of avoiding the dopamine dip after conventional orgasm which leads to disharmony. Eccentric characters such as, Pierre Bernard, *The Omnipotent Oom* founded the *Tantrik Order of America* in 1905 and later set up tantra and yoga clubs where tantric meditation and some sexual practices were taught.

In Britain, there has always been some tradition of tantric practices, mixed up with the mystery schools of meditation and the pagan and sex magic traditions with and without characters such as Alistair Crowley. It is impossible to disentangle the genuine from the fake, the hedonist and the sexual opportunist from those with a genuine search for the transcendent in the power and passion of sexuality. Much of what tantra is saying about energy and sexuality would not have been strange to Sigmund Freud whose theories of libido and the effects of the repression of sexual energy were becoming known. He admitted that he only dealt with the “basement and ground floor” of the human personality and tantra had a vision which included many more stories. Although Freud in his late years went away from his early insights on trauma, the body and the role of sexuality into more

metaphysical realms; Wilhelm Reich amongst his followers stayed with and developed this early discovery. This only now coming back in to general recognition with new understandings from neurology of the role of trauma and the body in psychological disturbance. Reich's work flowed, directly into bioenergetics and the cathartic therapies and indirectly into Gestalt therapy and many more areas that characterised the flowering of humanistic therapies which included the transpersonal and spiritual dimensions in the 60's. The mid part of the century saw many visits to the West by yogis who had connections to tantra; books like *Autobiography of a Yogi* by *Paramahansa Yogananda* gave some insight into the power of tantric kriya yoga with accounts of miraculous events and *siddhis*. Tibetan exiles began to make their way Westwards such as *Chogyam Trunkpa* to America *Namkai Norbu* to Italy and UK Tibetan centres were established.

In the development of the explosion of tantra just beginning as the Hayward Exhibition opened there is one figure that contributed most; the Indian "guru" then known as *Baghwan Shree Rajneesh*; later called Osho. He catalysed a meeting of East and West, bringing some Indian spiritual understanding together with western therapy techniques into a range of creative and often cathartic practises. Although some of this youthful enthusiasm resulted in excesses and was abusive; bringing the body in to meditation in a powerful way, reaped great rewards as well as some dangers of cathartic excess and breakdown. It is probable that there is a higher percentage of people who have realised enlightenment experiences through his work than in any other spiritual path in history. He became, like Reich, a victim of his own vision and charisma.



The colourful chaos of Indian spirituality and the chaos of the 60's would be just overwhelming and confusing without some map of how it all fitted together. Fortunately, such a map has been drawn and elaborated by the Integral thinker and writer, Ken Wilber. Conventional psychoanalysis aims to strengthen the ego yet most spiritual practises aim to dissolve the ego. What distinguishes a breakdown from a breakthrough? When is it best to surrender and let go (as many spiritual paths advise) and when to become more assertive and create boundaries? What is the possible connection between Jungian psychology and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy the current government favourite? When to pray and when to rage? What Wilber essentially said is that there are three broad realms; the *pre-personal* the realm of most conventional therapy which aims to produce a functioning adult in the world, *the personal* which extends that to become a fuller broader human being including emotions creativity and the spirit and *the transpersonal* which is the realm of spiritual practices which aims to allow the realisation of Oneness with the divine. The world of Osho tends to mix these together, with much resulting pain, confusion and breakdowns. The West with its winning blend of consumerism and individualism turns everything into a form of therapy and ultimately a narcissistic enterprise; as it has with yoga and now with tantra. Tantra is a spiritual path, but again from Wilber, spirituality means different things for people who are at different stages of consciousness. In India, probably much tantra was; and still is, primarily at the level of superstition offering protection from "evil" and help to gain advantage. For this reason; plus the residue of India's long history of puritan occupation; in India today tantriks are synonymous with black magic and death and very unsavoury characters. Spiritual practice; particularly if it includes the body is a preparation for death and this further increases suspicion. For any letting go is a death of the small self with which we can easily identify. This brings us back again to sex with the French term for orgasm, *le petit mort*; the little death.

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The seventies and eighties saw the beginning of a huge growth in interest in tantra. Cynically you could say that anything which combined rampant individualism with sex and mysticism was bound to be a winner. The start of the internet meant that tantric texts long hidden were soon available for all. Osho tantra and people inspired by his vision of Zorba the Buddha, together with 1960's hippies who seriously studied and practised, combined with yoga practitioners seeking greater depth than just asanas for the body. In the spiritual "shopping mall" of today everything is available; but the real price is not the cost of the workshops. Tantra means practices and practice takes time and commitment; both in short supply for many today. However tantra traditionally is also *vajrayana* – the thunderbolt path; with practices so powerful that you can attain enlightenment in one single lifetime. Sadly it is common to get calls from people who want it all in a day not even prepared to commit for a weekend of practice and teaching.

There is no such thing as real tantra with all the rest mere fakes, charlatans and opportunists. If Christianity contains so much diversity after "only" two thousand years with one founder and one book, The Bible; then tantra, more than twice as old; arising in many parts of the world with no one founder or root text will be very diverse. The only real text is the body and its subtle maps of the flows of energy and the deep principles of tantra: the subtle use of duality: masculine and feminine; yang and yin, Shiva and Shakti, method and wisdom to transcend duality. Also important is the skilful use of desire including the desires of the body rather than denial and asceticism to become more alive to the sacredness of all. There are many dangers and traditionally tantric practices have been kept secret for this reason, as well, no doubt, because of the human wish for power, control and exclusivity. Many years ago I was proudly told by the secretary of a Tibetan teacher, based in England that she "could count on the fingers of one hand the number of people that Rinpoche had initiated into tantra in thirty years."

Within tantra, there are practices which are so direct and powerful that their omission from any teachings suggests that they owe more to convenience than power. The use of mantras would be an example, they are so powerful in the vibrations that open and awaken the body that they cannot be ignored. *There is no tantra without mantra* is a well-known aphorism. Any practices which place sex as the focus are suspect particularly if the promise is sexual pleasure or personal growth. Pleasure always involves the ego and a grasping for more pleasure; bigger orgasms or more intense experiences. Tantric texts use words which are better translated as bliss or ecstasy than pleasure. If the aim is solely to improve relationships, reduce shame or cure trauma then the agenda is therapeutic not tantric. Healing and personal development are side-effects not aims in tantra. Most traditional tantric practices have the feminine as the centre; and for many, she is the initiator. Tantra is hugely respectful of the feminine. A primary emphasis in tantra is the transmuting or sublimation of sexual energy to fuel spiritual attainment rather than its release in sexual pleasure. This means using practices to move the energy up from the sexual centre in the body to the belly or heart or the head. Traditional tantra sexualises ritual whereas modern neo-tantra ritualises sex. It becomes just slower more considered sex with candles and joss sticks; richer on the senses and more complete in the body. This is totally fine; but has little to do with tantra. The sexualising of ritual is to see the whole world as the dance of Shiva and Shakti and every action as making love to life and creation itself. Traditional tantra involves principles of awareness as the foundation of any practices; not the creation of more and more experiences as if the world is a fairground. It is not just what am I experiencing but how fully am I experiencing and ultimately; who is it that is experiencing?

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Finally there is the every present sex industry which has adopted the adjective tantric as a new selling point. There is a continuum from the often damaged young women who have now re-launched themselves as tantric “goddesses” offering tantric experiences for large sums to very experienced therapists who provide genuine teaching on transmuting sexual energy and healing of sexual and relationship trauma. Tantra is such a “dirty” word that Facebook and Google won’t allow advertisements that mention the word. It has probably always been the case throughout history that tantra has been both used and abused and people are attracted to it for a wide range of reasons; some more earnestly spiritual than others. Undoubtedly the Church of England has people who come to church just because they like singing not from deep spiritual faith. Others will come for the sense of community and support and no one would say that was wrong. As Ken Wilber reminds us there is a spectrum of levels of consciousness and for some any sort of spirituality is closer to superstition than uniting with the Divine. This is certainly true in India today.

Therapists who use tantra, work with sexual energy in a more direct way than any psychotherapist would dare to these days with “defensive” therapy always fearing litigation, and the Government’s love of CBT which excludes the body, energy and the embodied nature of trauma. So far, most therapy only timidly embraces mindfulness as a connection to Eastern practices refined over thousands of years. It is an extraordinary fact the huge degree of sexual wounding through trauma and abuse and sexual neglect within our society. I have heard from many psychotherapy students that their training includes very little on sexuality. Sexual wounding and trauma for women in particular, cuts them off from their creative, powerful, embodied selves.

Within spiritual practitioners, tantra is a reminder of the “juicyness” of life and the embodied nature of the spiritual quest. Ascetic, thought-based practices of self-enquiry (“Who am I?”) from dry wizened, often celibate old men often do not suit most young Western women, sitting in their hundreds in India trying to use the mind to defeat the mind while neglecting their passion, emotion and bodies. The absolute devotion to the guru of *Bhakti* yoga again is too stereotyped feminine and unquestioning for most Western people.

There are ancient writings that talk of this era being the *Kali Yuga* when people are furthest away from spiritual realisation. In this time, the power of desire is strong and the advertising industry exists to strengthen it, so extreme practices which use the energy of desire in a skilful way are necessary. This is precisely how tantra operates; bringing awareness to desire and the very energies of aliveness. Practices cultivate and enhance the flow of energy in the body and then support greater awareness. The understanding of the deep nature of the masculine and feminine and how energy flows differently in them can help relationships. Writers such as David Deida have tried to give a sense of the deep masculine and the deep feminine and how they fit together. John Gray (*Men are from Mars...*) has tried to untangle some of the knots of relating and encouraged people to value difference. We have become very confused about this over this in the last half century being told that there are no differences between men and women except as a result of socialisation. Feminism has often left women not with the empowering knowledge that they can do anything but that they should do everything; resulting in greater burnout. Often a masculine notion of power predominates and the awesome power of the deep feminine is lost. This is the power of the darkness, the intuitive knowing of the body. Instead, the sacredness of the body is lost in self-harming behaviour and eating disorders. Men have been left feeling useless as the essential nature of the masculine is lost and there are no rites of passage or practices to support them in being men.

What society is left with is overgrown teenagers and despairing older men. Suicide is the biggest single killer of men in Britain age 15 – 34. Relationships and sexuality seems more of a puzzle than ever.

Forty years on from the Hayward Gallery exhibition tantra is now known of, but still not known about, by most. There are good books around hidden amongst the sexualised neo-tantra bedroom manuals. There have always been genuine practitioners and now more yoga teachers are studying the roots of yoga; beyond the health and fitness industry; some learning Sanskrit. There are workshops that teach aspects of tantra; mantras, meditations and ways of transmuting energy. The call to be fully embodied and fully alive and fully aware is stronger than ever as our disconnection from Nature, our own nature and each other takes its toll.

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