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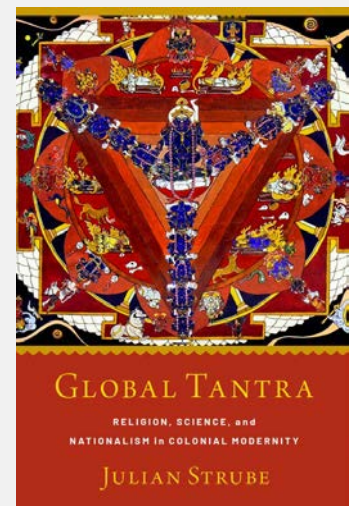
Tantra and the Global Historiography of Esotericism

Julian Strube

(University of Vienna)

Nov. 25, 2022 (Fri.)

16:30-18:00 (JST)



ABSTRACT:

Modern tantra is often viewed in terms of orientalist projection and cultural appropriation. While the commodification and commercialization of tantra is beyond doubt, a close look at its global reception since the nineteenth century reveals a complex tangle of exchanges in which learned South Asians played a crucial role. This talk will focus on Bengali participants in these exchanges, who identified tantra as “Indian occultism” and actively engaged, for instance, with the Theosophical Society. Rather than understanding this engagement as a “reaction” to a “Western export” of esotericism, Strube will explore local and diachronic (pre-colonial) developments in Bengal and relate them to global debates about religion, science, and nationalism. Complicating dichotomies between modernity and tradition, reform and orthodoxy, he will introduce a decentred approach to the historiography of esotericism that might be helpful for investigating similar developments in Asia.



Julian Strube is Assistant Professor in Religious Studies at the University of Vienna. He works from a global historical perspective on the relationship between religion and politics since the eighteenth century, focusing on exchanges between India, Europe, and North America. His third monograph, *Global Tantra: Religion, Science, and Nationalism in Colonial Modernity*, was published in 2022 by Oxford University Press. He has published widely on global religious history, religious comparativism, colonialism, esotericism, socialism, and far-right extremism.

Registration Deadline: Nov. 25, 10 AM (JST) at
<https://bit.ly/strube-at-tohoku>

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