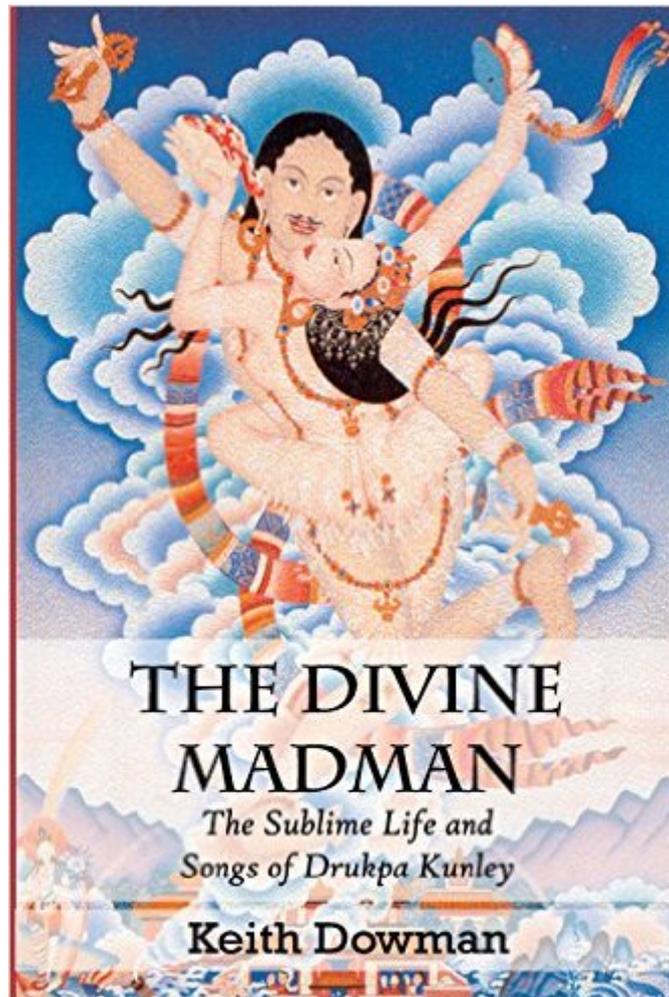


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The Divine Madman: The Sublime Life And Songs Of Drukpa Kunley



Synopsis

The Divine Madman is the secret biography of one of Tibet's best-loved saints, the buddha Drukpa Kunley. Drukpa Kunley was a "nyomba", a crazy yogi who taught through outrageous behavior and ribald humor, through symbolic action, songs and poetry. Using people's emotion, neuroses and sexuality, as a tantric yogi through skillfull means and crazy wisdom he awakened their buddha-nature. He belonged to the lineage of Tilo, Naro, Marpa and Milarepa and taught the same profound Mahamudra yoga, but his most secret teaching was radical Dzogchen, Tibet's existential yoga. He wandered as a tantric beggar through Central and Southern Tibet in the 15th century and is still well-known there as the hero of anti-establishment and anti-monastic tales and the author of bawdy songs. But in Bhutan he became more than an icon, he still is the patron saint of a country where the phallus is revered as a religious icon. This book is a collection of anecdotes and songs compiled by a Bhutanese scholar, Geshe Chaphu, made last century, which became a best seller in the Himalayas. It has been translated by Keith Dowman into easily accessible prose and poetry. Lee Baarslag has illustrated the work with her fine line-drawings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book changed my mind about religion. When I saw another culture who was able to see the humor and the craziness in whatever you want to call God or the universe it made me interested in learning more, and I really like a lot of buddhist philosophy. Worth a read if the only thing you've ever experienced from organized religion was forced obedience to a self-interested bureaucracy.

This translation of the biography of the divine madman Drukpa Kunley defies conventional review. On a conventional level it is ribald, and sassy, something of a combination of Henry Miller and Cervantes's Don Quixote. At times you may find yourself chuckling, at other times astounded at what you are reading, even shocked. On a spiritual plain it is meant to show the crazy wisdom of an awakened being carrying out his bodhisattva vows. Like the fabled koans of zen, it strains our intellectual beliefs and our credulity, and by doing that perhaps brings us to question the entire spiritual path, just as the Buddha advised us to do. What are we to make of a lama who is said to be awakened, yet when not destroying demons, seems to spend a great deal of his time drinking and deflowering virgins? Likely we've heard of modern examples of that same behavior from some of our spiritual leaders. You'll have to decide that one for yourself. Gave this a five star rating because no matter what you take from it, it will force you to think outside the box.

This is one of Keith's earlier translations and it is really good. It is about Drugpa Kunley who, like most true Buddhist Adepts, was very unpopular with the Buddhist Clergy. He was indeed a wild man with miraculous powers. Drugpa Kunley was a sexually precocious tantric master who regularly offended those who donned the robes but failed to wake up. Even so, he is the Patron Saint of Bhutan, which is the only country on Earth which measures success in terms of Gross National Happiness.

If you are a Buddhist, I really can't say what value this might have. As simply something to read, it's quite funny (if you have a certain sense of humor) and full of interesting things to learn if you aren't familiar with the subject matter. I enjoyed it a great deal.

An extraordinary biography in the Crazy Wisdom tradition, this book is a must read for all those imprisoned by Judeo Christian views and values.

Inspiring biography.

Funny guy

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