



Kali's Child: The Mystical and the Erotic in the Life and Teachings of Ramakrishna

Jeffrey J. Kripal

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In a book now marked by both critical acclaim and cross-cultural controversy, Jeffrey J. Kripal explores the life and teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a nineteenth-century Bengali saint who played a major role in the creation of modern Hinduism. Through extended textual and symbolic analyses of Ramakrishna's censored "secret talk," Kripal demonstrates that the saint's famous ecstatic and visionary experiences were driven by mystico-erotic energies that he neither fully accepted nor understood. The result is a striking new vision of Ramakrishna as a conflicted, homoerotic Tantric mystic that is as complex as it is clear and as sympathetic to the historical Ramakrishna as it is critical of his traditional portraits.

In a substantial new preface to this second edition, Kripal answers his critics, addresses the controversy the book has generated in India, and traces the genealogy of his work in the history of psychoanalytic discourse on mysticism, Hinduism, and Ramakrishna himself. *Kali's Child* has already proven to be provocative, groundbreaking, and immensely enjoyable.

"Only a few books make such a major contribution to their field that from the moment of publication things are never quite the same again. *Kali's Child* is such a book."—John Stratton Hawley, *History of Religions*

Winner of the American Academy of Religion's History of Religions Prize for the Best First Book of 1995

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