



Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools and Rascal Gurus

By Georg Feuerstein

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“A fascinating look at spiritual leaders, both past and present.”—*Booklist*

Crazy-wise adepts, cult leaders, and gurus challenge our common sense views of reality and norms of conduct. In their attempts to teach spiritual truths, they shock cognitive boundaries and jolt moral sensibilities with radical eccentricity, trickery, and excess.

Now for the first time, *Holy Madness* explores this universal dimension of spirituality in a readable and brilliant blend of history, philosophy, theology, and first-person accounts. Here are Fools for Christ, sitting naked on garbage heaps; eccentric Zen masters baffling their students with beatings and belly laughs; and enigmatic rascal gurus and spiritual clowns like Da-Ananda, Chögyam Trungpa, G. I. Gurdjieff, and Aleister Crowley.

How can you tell if the antics of a Holy Fool are legitimate teaching tools or simply the acts of a self-indulgent lunatic? This fascinating study tackles this question and many others, providing an unbiased exploration of the mechanics of spiritual life.

“It makes good, stiff reading for folks who hanker for travel of the mind and heart.”—*Boston Globe*

“A totally absorbing and fascinating piece of work by an author of considerable intellectual caliber . . . a superb study in the further reaches of human nature.”—Colin Wilson, author of *The Outsider*

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- Sales Rank: #1602722 in Books
- Published on: 1992-10-01
- Released on: 1992-10-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.68" h x .71" w x 5.03" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Russian spiritual teacher Georgei Gurdjieff force-fed vegetarians hefty meat dishes. Japanese Zen master Lin-chi thrashed his pupils. Indian guru Meher Baba remained silent for 43 years. All employed what Feuerstein, author of books on yoga and religion, calls "holy madness" or "crazy wisdom," using eccentric behavior or shock tactics to communicate an alternative vision. A former devotee of Da Free John (aka Da Love-Ananda, ne Franklin Jones), Feuerstein presents critical cameos of holy fools (Aleister Crowley, Bhagwan Rajneesh, etc.) as well as guidelines for choosing a wise, enlightened guru and avoiding the exploitative. Yet his gallery of spiritual eccentrics is so diverse--ranging from Christian mystics to Hindu holy men who live on garbage heaps--that it's hard to credit the author's generalizations about the value of holy folly as an authentic path to transcendence.

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From Library Journal

Music mogul Lissauer has compiled an alphabetical list of over 19,000 songs, covering standards and hits that include minstrel tunes, war songs, operetta pieces, jazz, instrumentals, blues, pop, rock, rhythm and blues, and country and western. Each entry includes writer and lyricist, date of popularity, and usually a sentence or two describing its context and the performer(s) who popularized it. A year-by-year listing follows, and the volume closes with an index of the writers (but not performers). This is a good tool for basic information, but those libraries already owning the 13-volume series *Popular Music*, edited by Bruce Pollock and Nat Shapiro (Gale, 1975-88), and not concerned with the gay Nineties will find Lissauer unnecessary.

- *Robert Aken, Univ. of Kentucky Libs., Lexington*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Here, Feuerstein (*The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, 1990- -not reviewed) explores the arcane and dramatic world of "crazy wisdom"--the purposefully outrageous, convention-destroying behavior of spiritual adepts in every great tradition--peppering his fascinating historical survey of gurus and tricksters with insights from modern psychology and his own experience in an unnamed contemporary cult. "In their realization or experience, adepts may be above good and evil," Feuerstein writes. "In their actions, however, they are not." Tracing the shadowy tradition of crazy wisdom from the self-abnegating "Holy Fools" of early Christianity and Sufism (the "Way of Blame") to the greatly accomplished teaching adepts of India and Tibet (including the legendary Milarepa), Feuerstein paints a richly suggestive picture of "crazy wise" spiritual experience--as solitary and superb as a saint pretending to be mad. His portraits of modern adepts, however, reveal how difficult it is to balance mysticism with common morality. G.I. Gurdjieff, Chogyam Trungpa, Bhagwan Rajneesh, Da Love Ananda (a.k.a. Da Free John): Feuerstein alleges that each (to greater or lesser degree) indulged in outrageous behavior to flex his spiritual muscle in the face of dourly submissive disciples. Particularly surprising are accounts of the alcohol-drenched debauches of Trungpa and Da Love Ananda (Rajneesh's weaknesses are too well known to surprise). Feuerstein speculates that neurosis survives enlightenment, and he labels these singular men "relics from an archaic spirituality"--yet he apparently longs to infuse the personal-growth field with their wisdom. A provocative and personally charged attempt to reconcile an ancient spiritual form to the modern age. -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Cyr:

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these people survives, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that often many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Yes, by reading a book your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stay than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading a book, we give you this kind of Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools and Rascal Gurus book as beginner and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

Dale Winsett:

People live in this new time of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the time or they will get wide range of stress from both lifestyle and work. So , once we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not only a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, the actual book you have read is definitely Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools and Rascal Gurus.

Edwin Courville:

Beside that Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools and Rascal Gurus in your phone, it could possibly give you a way to get nearer to the new knowledge or facts. The information and the knowledge you might got here is fresh from the oven so don't end up being worry if you feel like an aged people live in narrow town. It is good thing to have Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools and Rascal Gurus because this book offers for you readable information. Do you occasionally have book but you don't get what it's exactly about. Oh come on, that would not happen if you have this in the hand. The Enjoyable option here cannot be questionable, like treasuring beautiful island. Use you still want to miss that? Find this book and also read it from now!

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