



Untangling Karma: Intimate Zen Stories on Healing Trauma

Judith Ragir

Monkfish Book Publishing (Jul 5, 2022)

Softcover \$18.99 (280pp)

978-1-948626-69-9

Judith Ragir dismantles collective and individual traumas in her memoir *Untangling Karma*.

Marrying secular and sacred life, Ragir reflects on her roles as a mother, a Buddhist priest, a repudiated Jewish woman, and a trauma survivor. She participated in retreats to understand suffering, traveling to the South, Ghana, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Auschwitz. Bearing witness to suffering at each site, she addresses intergenerational trauma in every encounter, making way for healing in the face of repeating cycles of suffering.

Ragir grew up in the hippie culture of the 1960s, and she addresses her own sexual confusion due to childhood abuse, too, which made her unable to be as free-loving as her peers. She also discusses past dependency on the silent detachment of the Buddhist community, which lasted until she realized that it was another way of avoiding her suffering. Now, Ragir strives to understand the interconnectedness of all life. She recognizes the necessity of multiple intervention methods in the healing process and encourages continuous practice in everyday life for others seeking enlightenment.

Ragir's writing is cordial, insightful, and wise. Delving into difficult topics including racism, sexism, antisemitism, and past abuse with equanimity and honesty, she addresses how larger legacies affected how she was treated in her family and society. Her spiritual and emotional dissatisfaction with patriarchal hegemony, and with divisions between her family and the Black women who were housekeepers in their household, impacted her openness to spirituality and her views of white privilege. Seeking reconciliation and Buddhist stories from women, this is a book about feminist religion and the humanity of sexuality, childbearing, and motherhood.

Untangling Karma is an intersectional memoir about 1960s American hippie culture, emerging racial awareness, and Buddhist awakening.

ALI ORTIZ (July / August 2022)

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