



# **Jesus as Guru: The Image of Christ Among Hindus and Christians in India. (Currents of Encounter)**

*Jan Peter Schouten*

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People in India form images of Jesus Christ that link up with their own culture. Hindus have given Jesus a place among the teachers and gods of their own religion, seeing in his life something of the wisdom and mysticism that is so central to Hinduism. Christians in India also make use of the concepts provided by Hinduism when they wish to express the meaning of Christ. Thus, in any case, Jesus is-for Hindus and Christians-a guru, a teacher of wisdom who speaks with divine authority. But for many Hindu philosophers and Christian theologians there is much more that can be said about him within the Indian framework. He can be described as an *avatara*, a divine descent, or linked to the Brahman, the all-encompassing Reality. This study looks at both Hindu and Christian views of Christ, starting with that of the Hindu reformer Rammohan Roy at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as well as those of the first Christian theologians of India. The views of Mahatma Gandhi and the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission are discussed, and those of influential Christian schools such as the Ashram movement and *dalit* theology. Five intermezzos indicate how artists in India portray Jesus Christ.

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