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Religious imaginary is a way of conceiving and structuring the world within the conceptual and imaginative traditions of the religious. Using religious imaginary as a reference, this book analyses temporal ideologies and expressions of historicity in South Asia in the early modern, pre-colonial and early colonial period.

Explores the significance of levity and humor in South Asian religious traditions.

Do religions justify and cause violence or are they more appropriately seen as forces for peace and tolerance? Featuring contributions from international experts in the field, this book explores the debate that has emerged in the context of secular modernity about whether religion is a primary cause of social division, conflict and war, or whether this is simply a distortion of the 'true' significance of religion and that if properly followed it promotes peace, harmony, goodwill and social cohesion. Focusing on how this debate is played out in the South Asian context, the book engages with issues relating to religion and violence in both its classical and contemporary formations. The collection is designed to look beyond the stereotypical images and idealized portrayals of the peaceful South Asian religious traditions (especially Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and

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Sufi), which can occlude their own violent histories and to analyze the diverse attitudes towards, and manifestations of violence within the major religious traditions of South Asia. Divided into three sections, the book also discusses globalization and the theoretical issues that inform contemporary discussions of the relationship between religion and violence.

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Challenges prevailing conceptions of what religious ritual does and how it achieves its ends. Religious rituals are often seen as unchanging and ahistorical bearers of long-standing traditions. But as this book demonstrates, ritual is a lively platform for social change and innovation in the religions of South Asia. Drawing from Hindu and Jain examples in India, Nepal, and North America, the essays in this volume, written by renowned scholars of religion, explore how the intentional, conscious, and public invention or alteration of ritual can effect dramatic social transformation, whether in dethroning a Nepali king or sanctioning same-sex marriage. *Ritual Innovation* shows how the very idea of ritual as a conservative force misreads the history of religion by overlooking ritual's inherent creative potential and its adaptability to new contexts and circumstances. "The breadth of coverage in *Ritual Innovation* is extraordinary and refreshing in terms of the types of contemporary ritual practices and practitioners receiving attention, not to mention the geographic spread across South Asia. This book

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makes a significant contribution to the scholarly literature on South Asian religions and contemporary Hinduism.” — Karline McLain, author of *The Afterlife of Sai Baba: Competing Visions of a Global Saint*

The dual foci for this collection of Raymond Williams' most important writings are Swaminarayan Hinduism and South Asian immigrants in the United States. Both are topics of wide and growing interest in India and in many countries where South Indians have settled. Swaminarayan Hinduism's growth in the past few decades in India and among Indians abroad has been remarkable: one subsect now has 8100 centers around the world where weekly meetings are held. The second focus is on the religions of South Asian immigrants: Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs and Christians. The first section is introductory and sets the stage through an analysis of the transmission of religious traditions. The second section moves from the development of Swaminarayan Hinduism and its leadership in India to its development in the United States as exemplified in Chicago. The third section analyzes the impact South Asian religions are having in the United States and the affects that migration and modernization are having on the religions of the immigrants.

British Columbia is Canada's most ethnically diverse province. Yet in general we need to know more about the diversity of religions that accompanied immigrants to the province and how they are practised today. This book offers intimate portraits of local religious groups, including Hindus and Sikhs from South Asia; Buddhist organizations

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from Southeast Asia; and Tibetan, Japanese, and Chinese religions from East and Central Asia. The first comprehensive, comparative examination of Asian religions in British Columbia, this book is mandatory reading for teachers, policy makers, scholars of local history and culture and of Asian Canadian studies.

Dialogue between characters is an important feature of South Asian religious literature: entire narratives are often presented as a dialogue between two or more individuals, or the narrative or discourse is presented as a series of embedded conversations from different times and places. Including some of the most established scholars of South Asian religious texts, this book examines the use of dialogue in early South Asian texts with an interdisciplinary approach that crosses traditional boundaries between religious traditions. The contributors shed new light on the cultural ideas and practices within religious traditions, as well as presenting an understanding of a range of dynamics - from hostile and competitive to engaged and collaborative. This book is the first to explore the literary dimensions of dialogue in South Asian religious sources, helping to reframe the study of other literary traditions around the world.

Explores how objects shape the worlds of religious participants across a range of South Asian traditions. *Sacred Matters* explores the lives of material objects in South Asian religions. Spanning a range of traditions including Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, and Christianity, the book demonstrates how sacred items influence and enliven the worlds of religious participants across South Asia and into the diaspora. Contributors examine a variety of objects to describe the ways sacred materials derive and confer meaning and efficacy, emerging from

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and giving shape to religious and nonreligious realms alike. Material forms of deity and divine power are considered along with commonplace ritual items, including images, clay pots, and camphor. The work also attends to materiality's complex role within the "materially suspicious" contexts of Islam, Theravada Buddhism, and Roman Catholicism. This engaging collection presents new frameworks for contemplating the ways in which historical, social, and sacred processes intertwine and collectively shape human and divine activity.

An assessment of the quality of existing scholarship on South Asian religious traditions in the Americas, 925 publications are covered.

The South Asian Christian diaspora is largely invisible in the literature about religion and migration. This is the first comprehensive study of South Asian Christians living in Europe and North America, presenting the main features of these diasporas, their community histories and their religious practices. The South Asian Christian diaspora is pluralistic both in terms of religious adherence, cultural tradition and geographical areas of origin. This book gives justice to such pluralism and presents a multiplicity of cultures and traditions typical of the South Asian Christian diaspora. Issues such as the institutionalization of the religious traditions in new countries, identity, the paradox of belonging both to a minority immigrant group and a majority religion, the social functions of rituals, attitudes to language, generational transfer, and marriage and family life, are all discussed.

"This book, the first of two volumes, is the outgrowth of an international, interdisciplinary conference entitled 'Portuguese and Luso-Asian legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511-2011' that was held in Singapore and Malacca on 28-30 September 2010"--P. [xv].

Explores the practice of taking ritual vows in South Asia, a lay tradition prevalent in the

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region's religions.

Looks at Western understandings of South Asian religions and indigenous responses from pre-colonial to contemporary times.

The religious landscape of South Asia is complex and fascinating. While existing literature tends to focus on the majority religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, much less attention is given to Jainism, Sikhism, Islam or Christianity. While not neglecting the majority traditions, this valuable resource also explores the important role which the minority traditions play in the religious life of the subcontinent, covering popular as well as elite expressions of religious faith. By examining the realities of religious life, and the ways in which the traditions are practised on the ground, this book provides an illuminating introduction to religion in South Asia.

Over the past five decades, the field of religion-and-science scholarship has experienced a considerable expansion. This volume explores the historical and contemporary perspectives of the relationship between religion, technology and science with a focus on South and East Asia. These three areas are not seen as monolithic entities, but as discursive fields embedded in dynamic processes of cultural exchange and transformation. Bridging these arenas of knowledge and practice traditionally seen as distinct and disconnected, the book reflects on the

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ways of exploring the various dimensions of their interconnection. Through its various chapters, the collection provides an examination of the use of modern scientific concepts in the theologies of new religious organizations, and challenges the traditional notions of space by Western scientific conceptions in the 19th century. It looks at the synthesis of ritual elements and medical treatment in China and India, and at new funeral practices in Japan. It discusses the intersections between contemporary Western Buddhism, modern technology, and global culture, and goes on to look at women's rights in contemporary Pakistani media. Using case studies grounded in carefully delineated temporal and regional frameworks, chapters are grouped in two sections; one on religion and science, and another on religion and technology. Illustrating the manifold perspectives and the potential for further research and discussion, this book is an important contribution to the studies of Asian Religion, Science and Technology, and Religion and Philosophy.

Explores how religious travel in India is transforming religious identities and self-constructions. In an increasingly global world where convenient modes of travel have opened the door to international and intraregional tourism and brought together people from different religious and ethnic communities, religious journeying in India has become the site of evolving and often paradoxical forms

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of self-construction. Through ethnographic reflections, the contributors to this volume explore religious and nonreligious motivations for religious travel in India and show how pilgrimages, missionary travel, the exportation of cultural art forms, and leisure travel among coreligionists are transforming not only religious but also regional, national, transnational, and personal identities. The volume engages with central themes in South Asian studies such as gender, exile, and spirituality; a variety of religions, including Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity; and understudied regions and emerging places of pilgrimage such as Manipur and Maharashtra. “It’s rare to find such diverse accounts of religious travel collected in a single volume, where scholars’ engagements with individual places of pilgrimage in India and with the journeys surrounding them are truly in conversation with one another. For readers, it makes for a deeply enlightening journey. It also raises an interesting question: Is the reality of India powerful enough that it absorbs divergent expressions of religious tourism, making of them a common fabric? Here, so unusually, readers have the materials to decide.” — John Stratton Hawley, author of *A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement*

Objects of worship are an aspect of the material dimension of lived religion in South Asia. The omnipresence of these objects and their use is a theme which

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cuts across the religious traditions in the pluralistic religious culture of the region. Divine power becomes manifest in the objects and for the devotees they may represent power regardless of religious identity. This book looks at how objects of worship dominate the religious landscape of South Asia, and in what ways they are of significance not just from religious perspectives but also for the social life of the region. The contributions to the book show how these objects are shaped by traditions of religious aesthetics and have become conceptual devices woven into webs of religious and social meaning. They demonstrate how the objects have a social relationship with those who use them, sometimes even treated as being alive. The book discusses how devotees relate to such objects in a number of ways, and even if the objects belong to various traditions they may attract people from different communities and can also be contested in various ways. By analysing the specific qualities that make objects eligible for a status and identity as living objects of worship, the book contributes to an understanding of the central significance of these objects in the religious and social life of South Asia. It will be of interest to students and scholars of Religious Studies and South Asian Religion, Culture and Society.

"Mayuree Mahal" is an empirically verified sociological novel about love, relation, religion and south Asian nationality not like Taj Mahal of India or Rani Mahal of

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Nepal however, it is a similar heart touching gift of divine love to a lover on 21st century south Asia. A rich Indian Marwari girl weds a poor orphan Nepali boy and they make a romantic honeymoon trip on Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. They travel entire south Asia, make a crazy business plan, earn huge money, establish business firm in each country. They have analyzed the geography, art, culture, sociology, economy and political history of the region from the post postmodern feminists' perspectives. It analyses every nook and corner of south Asian religions (Hinduism, Islamism, Buddhism and Christianity), arts and cultures. It has analyzed the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, rituals and festivals scientifically. It advocates for a single south Asian Nationality. The chief assumption of the novel is, "The world's largest democracy with nuclear power- India and Pakistan will be a counter to USA, or Russia, if we can settle the Kashmir disputes". The novel has attempted to re explore the Indus civilization and redefine the God. The young couple have explored and demonstrated the best solutions to seven decade long debated China, India and Pakistan's tripartite Kashmir disputes. It will be a guide book for south Asian young teen lovers and parents about love relation, culture and society. South Asia is not rigid on love, relations and sexual activities but practice it is against the young generation it has been analyzed from the scientific

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religious perspectives of south Asian cultures.

Critically assesses recent debates about the colonial construction of Hinduism. Written by experts in their field, the chapters present historical and empirical arguments as well as theoretical reflections on the topic, offering new insights into the nature of the construction of religion in India.

The Routledge Handbook of South Asian Religions presents critical research, overviews, and case studies on religion in historical South Asia, in the seven nation states of contemporary South Asia: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, and in the South Asian diaspora. Chapters by an international set of experts analyse formative developments, roots, changes and transformations, religious practices and ideas, identities, relations, territorialisation, and globalisation in historical and contemporary South Asia. The Handbook is divided into two parts which first analyse historical South Asian religions and their developments and second contemporary South Asia religions that are influenced by both religious pluralism and their close connection to nation states and their ideological power. Contributors argue that religion has been used as a tool for creating nations as well as majorities within those nations in South Asia, despite their enormous diversity, in particular religious diversity. The Handbook explores these diversities and tensions, historical developments,

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and the present situation across religious traditions by utilising an array of approaches and from the point of view of various academic disciplines. Drawing together a remarkable collection of leading and emerging scholars, this handbook is an invaluable research tool and will be of interest to researchers and students in the fields of Asian religion, religion in context, and South Asian religions.

Examines how embodiment is conceived and experienced in South Asian religions. Refiguring the Body provides a sustained interrogation of categories and models of the body grounded in the distinctive idioms of South Asian religions, particularly Hindu and Buddhist traditions. The contributors engage prevailing theories of the body in the Western academy that derive from philosophy, social theory, and feminist and gender studies. At the same time, they recognize the limitations of applying Western theoretical models as the default epistemological framework for understanding notions of embodiment that derive from non-Western cultures. Divided into three sections, this collection of essays explores material bodies, embodied selves, and perfected forms of embodiment; divine bodies and devotional bodies; and gendered logics defining male and female bodies. The contributors seek to establish theory parity in scholarly investigations and to re-figure body theories by taking seriously the contributions of South Asian discourses to theorizing the body.

The first textbook to focus on the history of lived Shi'ism in South Asia Everyday Shi'ism in South Asia is an introduction to the everyday life and cultural memory of Shi'i women and men, focusing on the religious worlds of both individuals and communities at particular historical moments and places in the Indian subcontinent. Author Karen Ruffle draws upon an

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array primary sources, images, and ethnographic data to present topical case studies offering broad snapshots Shi'i life as well as microscopic analyses of ritual practices, material objects, architectural and artistic forms, and more. Focusing exclusively on South Asian Shi'ism, an area mostly ignored by contemporary scholars who focus on the Arab lands of Iran and Iraq, the author shifts readers' analytical focus from the center of Islam to its periphery. Ruffle provides new perspectives on the diverse ways that the Shi'a intersect with not only South Asian religious culture and history, but also the wider Islamic humanistic tradition. Written for an academic audience, yet accessible to general readers, this unique resource: Explores Shi'i religious practice and the relationship between religious normativity and everyday religious life and material culture Contextualizes Muharram rituals, public performances, festivals, vow-making, and material objects and practices of South Asian Shi'a Draws from author's studies and fieldwork throughout India and Pakistan, featuring numerous color photographs Places Shi'i religious symbols, cultural values, and social systems in historical context Includes an extended survey of scholarship on South Asian Shi'ism from the seventeenth century to the present Everyday Shi'ism in South Asia is an important resource for scholars and students in disciplines including Islamic studies, South Asian studies, religious studies, anthropology, art history, material culture studies, history, and gender studies, and for English-speaking members of South Asian Shi'i communities.

This book introduces the term "otherism" and looks at the discourse of otherism and the issue of otherness in South Asian religion, literature and film. It examines cultural questions related to the human condition of being the "other," of the process of "othering" and of the representation of "otherness" and its religious, cultural and ideological implications. The book

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applies the perspectives of ideological criticism, theories of hybridity, orientalism, nationalism, and gender and queer studies to gain new insights into the literature, film and culture of South Asia. It looks at the different ways of interpreting "otherness" today. The book goes on to analyze the ideological implications of the creation of "otherness" with regard to religious and cultural identity and the legitimation of power, as well as how the representation of "otherness" reflects the power structures of contemporary societies in South Asia. Offering a well-thought-out reflection on important cultural questions as well as a deep insight into the study of religion and "otherness" in South Asian literature and film, this book is a pioneering project that is of interest to scholars of South Asian Studies and South Asian religions, literatures and cultures. Explores the social treatment of death in South Asian religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and other traditions. Includes material on women and marginalized groups.

This volume reflects the new directions of research in South Asian archaeology and art. Priority is given to work with primary sources: results of recent fieldwork, including the study of museum collections, results of previous unpublished field work and new discoveries, interpretations and supporting documentation, highlighting new trends. Twenty-six contributions have been arranged according to a chronological and thematic perspective. This book deals with the material expression of diverse religious trends.

Religious procession is a significant dimension of religion in South Asia. Processions are central not only in Hinduism, but also Islam, Christianity, Jainism and Sikhism, which have large procession rituals. The last years have seen an increase in processions and ritualizations of space both in South Asia and in the South Asian Diaspora. Processions are religious display events and the increase in processions are functions of religious pluralism and competition

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about public space as well as economic prosperity and a revival of religious identities. Processions often bring together religion and politics since they are about public space, domination and contestation. Written by leading specialists on religious processions and ritualization of public space in South Asia and in the Diaspora, this volume presents current research on the interpretations of the role of processions, the recent increase in processions and changes in the procession traditions. *South Asian Religions on Display* will appeal to students and scholars of Asian studies, anthropology, religion and political science. Traditionally, research on the history of Asian religions has been marked by a bias for literary evidence, privileging canonical texts penned in 'classical' languages. Not only has a focus on literary evidence shaped the dominant narratives about the religious histories of Asia, in both scholarship and popular culture, but it has contributed to the tendency to study different religious traditions in relative isolation from one another. Today, moreover, historical work is often based on modern textual editions and, increasingly, on electronic databases. What may be lost, in the process, is the visceral sense of the text as artifact – as a material object that formed part of a broader material culture, in which the boundaries between religious traditions were sometimes more fluid than canonical literature might suggest. This volume brings together specialists in a variety of Asian cultures to discuss the methodological challenges involved in integrating material evidence for the reconstruction of the religious histories of South, Southeast, Central, and East Asia. By means of specific 'test cases,' the volume explores the importance of considering material and literary evidence in concert. What untold stories do these sources help us to recover? How might they push us to reevaluate historical narratives traditionally told from literary sources? By addressing these questions from the

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perspectives of different subfields and religious traditions, contributors map out the challenges involved in interpreting different types of data, assessing the problems of interpretation distinct to specific types of material evidence (e.g., coins, temple art, manuscripts, donative inscriptions) and considering the issues raised by the different patterns in the preservation of such evidence in different locales. Special attention is paid to newly-discovered and neglected sources; to our evidence for trade, migration, and inter-regional cultural exchange; and to geographical locales that served as "contact zones" connecting cultures. In addition, the chapters in this volume represent the rich range of religious traditions across Asia – including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto, and Chinese religions, as well as Islam and eastern Christianities.

Re-imagining South Asian Religions is a collection of essays offering new ways of understanding aspects of Hindu, Tibetan Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Theosophical, and Indian Christian experiences.

Drawing on original fieldwork, this book develops a fresh methodological approach to the study of indigenous understandings of disease as possession, and looks at healing rituals in different South Asian cultural contexts. Contributors discuss the meaning of 'disease', 'possession' and 'healing' in relation to South Asian religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism, and how South Asians deal with the divine in order to negotiate health and wellbeing. The book goes on to look at goddesses, gods and spirits as a cause and remedy of a

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variety of diseases, a study that has proved significant to the ethics and politics of responding to health issues. It contributes to a consolidation and promotion of indigenous ways as a method of understanding physical and mental imbalances through diverse conceptions of the divine. Chapters offer a fascinating overview of healing rituals in South Asia and provide a full-length, sustained discussion of the interface between religion, ritual, and folklore. The book presents a fresh insight into studies of Asian Religion and the History of Medicine.

"e;In 1511, a Portuguese expedition under the command of Afonso de Albuquerque arrived on the shores of Malacca, taking control of the prosperous Malayan port-city after a swift military campaign. Portugal, a peripheral but then technologically advanced country in southwestern Europe since the latter fifteenth century, had been in the process of establishing solid outposts all along Asia's litoral in order to participate in the most active and profitable maritime trading routes of the day. As it turned out, the Portuguese presence and influence in the Malayan Peninsula and elsewhere in continental and insular Asia expanded far beyond the sphere of commerce and extended over time well into the twenty-first century. Five hundred years later, a conference held in Singapore brought together a large group of scholars from widely different national, academic and disciplinary contexts, to analyse and discuss the intricate

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consequences of Portuguese interactions in Asia over the longue duree. The result of these discussions is a stimulating set of case studies that, as a rule, combine original archival and/or field research with innovative historiographical perspectives. Luso-Asian communities, real and imagined, and Luso-Asian heritage, material and symbolic, are studied with depth and insight. The range of thematic, chronological and geographic areas covered in these proceeding is truly remarkable, showing not only the extraordinary relevance of revisiting Luso-Asian interactions in the longer term, but also the surprising dynamism within an area of studies which seemed on the verge of exhaustion. After all, archives from all over the world, from Rio de Janeiro to London, from Lisbon to Rome, and from Goa to Macao, might still hold some secrets on the subject of Luso-Asian relations, when duly explored by resourceful scholars."e; - Rui M. Loureiro, Centro de Historia de Alem-Mar, Lisbon.

In different stages in the history of South Asian religions, the term yogin? has been used in various contexts to designate various things: a female adept of yoga, a female tantric practitioner, a sorceress, a woman dedicated to a deity, or a certain category of female deities. This book brings together recent interdisciplinary perspectives on the medieval South Asian cults of the Yoginis, such as textual-philological, historical, art historical, indological, anthropological,

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ritual and terminological. The book discusses the medieval yogin? cult, as illustrated in early ?aiva tantric texts, and their representations in South Asian temple iconography. It looks at the roles and hypostases of yogin?s in contemporary religious traditions, as well as the transformations of yogin?-related ritual practices. In addition, this book systematizes the multiple meanings, and proposes definitions of the concept and models for integrating the semantic fields of 'yogin?.' Highlighting the importance of research from complementary disciplines for the exploration of complex themes in South Asian studies, this book is of interest to scholars of South Asian Studies and Religious Studies. This volume brings together sixteen articles on the religions, literatures and histories of South and Central Asia in tribute to Patrick Olivelle, one of North America's leading Sanskritists and historians of early India. Over the last four decades, the focus of his scholarship has been on the ascetic and legal traditions of India, but his work as both a researcher and a teacher extends beyond early Indian religion and literature. 'Religion and Identity and South Asia and Beyond' is a testament to that influence. The contributions in this volume, many by former students of Olivelle, are committed to linguistic and historical rigor, combined with sensitivity to how the study of Asia has been changing over the last several decades.

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South Asia is home to many of the world's most vibrant religious faiths. It is also one of the most dynamic and historically rich regions on earth, where changing political and social structures have caused religions to interact and hybridise in unique ways. This textbook introduces the contemporary religions of South Asia, from the indigenous religions such as the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh traditions, to incoming influences such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In ten chapters, it surveys the nine leading belief systems of South Asia and explains their history, practices, values and worldviews. A final chapter helps students relate what they have learnt to religious theory, paving the way for future study. Written by leading experts, *Religions of South Asia* combines solid scholarship with clear and lively writing to provide students with an accessible and comprehensive introduction. All chapters are specially designed to aid cross-religious comparison, following a standard format covering set topics and issues; the book reveals to students the core principles of each faith, compares it to neighbouring traditions, and its particular place in South Asian history and society. It is a perfect resource for all students of South Asia's diverse and fascinating faiths.

This book explores the key motif of the religious other in devotional (bhakti) literatures and practices from across the Indian subcontinent un.masks processes

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of representation that involve adoption, appropriation, and rejection of different social and religious agents. The book reconsiders and challenges inherited notions of the bhakta's or devotee's other. Considering the ways in which bhakti might be conceived as having an inter-regional impact--as a force, discourse, network, mythology, ethic--the book critically engages with extant scholarly narratives about what bhakti is and traces when and how those narratives have been used. The sheer diversity of South Asia's devotional traditions renders them an especially rich resource for examining social and religious fault lines, thereby furthering scholarly understanding of how communalism and sectarianism originate and develop on local or regional levels, with wider geographic implications. Bringing together studies from a subcontinent-wide variety of linguistic, geographical, and historical frames for the first time, this book will be an important contribution to the literature on bhakti and will be of interest to scholars of South Asian Religions and Asian Religions.

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