

Special Issue

Gurus, Priestesses, Saints, Mediums and Yoginis: Holy Women as Influencers in Hindu Culture

Message from the Guest Editors

Applying the “influencer” concept to the study of religion, this Special Issue explores the varieties of strategies that holy women in diverse roles use for gaining and expressing power. The volume examines different concepts of holiness and leadership for men and women, the role of charisma, and the arenas of activity and accomplishment for holy women in India and abroad.

Questions the volume explores include: What sources of power engender and facilitate holy women’s authority and leadership in Hinduism? How do they bring others to their ways of thinking? How do they use their power to advance new revelations, organize new traditions, and build institutions? How do holy women relate their power to the broader Hindu patriarchal structures?

Against this backdrop, this volume examines the influence of experience, power, culture, and gender on holy women’s authority in the Hindu tradition. Thus, the volume explores the depths and nuances of holy women’s power within and outside of the mainstream in Hindu culture.

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Message from the Editorial Board

Fresh developments in the disciplines that consistently make significant contributions to our understanding of religious personality, authority, devotion, and community – disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to history, art history, philosophy, literary criticism, and political science – fuel general, as well as scholarly, interest in the world's religions.

Religions is inviting innovative and comparative contributions. Please consider Religions as an exceptional, exciting enterprise ready to reward your trust, attention, and participation.

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