



## **Goddess Traditions in Tantric Hinduism: History, Practice and Doctrine (Routledge Studies in Tantric Traditions)**

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Hinduism cannot be understood without the Great Goddess and the goddess-orientated Shakta traditions. The Goddess pervades Hinduism at all levels, from aniconic village deities to high-caste pan-Hindu goddesses to esoteric, tantric goddesses. Nevertheless, the highly influential tantric forms of South Asian goddess worship have only recently begun to draw scholarly attention. This book addresses the increasing interest in the Great Goddess and the tantric traditions of India by exploring the history, doctrine and practices of the Shakta tantric traditions.

The highly influential tantric forms of South Asian goddess worship form a major part of what is known as 'Shaktism', and is often considered one of the major branches of Hinduism next to Vaivism, Vaishnavism and Smartism. Shaktism is, however, less clearly defined than the other major branches, and the book looks at the texts of the Shakta traditions that constitute the primary sources for gaining insights into the Shakta religious imaginative, ritual practices and history. It provides an historical exploration of distinctive Indian ways of imagining God as Goddess, and surveys the important origins and developments within Shakta history, practice and doctrine in its diversity.

Bringing together contributions from some of the foremost scholars in the field of tantric studies, the book provides a platform for the continued research into Hindu goddesses, yoga, and tantra for those interested in understanding the religion and culture in South Asia.

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