



Women's Lives, Women's Rituals in the Hindu Tradition

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In this book, Tracy Pintchman has assembled ten leading scholars of Hinduism to explore the complex relationship between Hindu women's rituals and their lives beyond ritual. The book focuses particularly on the relationship of women's ritual practices to domesticity, exposing and exploring the nuances, complexities, and limits of this relationship. In many cultural and historical contexts, including contemporary India, women's everyday lives tend to revolve heavily around domestic and interpersonal concerns, especially care for children, the home, husbands, and other relatives. Hence, women's religiosity also tends to emphasize the domestic realm and the relationships most central to women. But women's religious concerns certainly extend beyond domesticity. Furthermore, even the domestic religious activities that Hindu women perform may not merely replicate or affirm traditionally formulated domestic ideals but may function strategically to reconfigure, reinterpret, criticize, or even reject such ideals. This volume takes a fresh look at issues of the relationship between Hindu women's ritual practices and normative domesticity. In so doing, it emphasizes female innovation and agency in constituting and transforming both ritual and the domestic realm and calls attention to the limitations of normative domesticity as a category relevant to many forms of Hindu women's religious practice.

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