



Provincial Hinduism: Religion and Community in Gwalior City

Daniel Gold

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Provincial Hinduism explores intersecting religious worlds in an ordinary Indian city that remains close to its traditional roots, while bearing witness to the impact of globalization. Daniel Gold looks at modern religious life in the central Indian city of Gwalior, drawing attention to the often complex religious sensibilities behind ordinary Hindu practice. Gold describes temples of different types, their legendary histories, and the people who patronize them. He also explores the attraction of Sufi shrines for many Gwalior Hindus. Delicate issues of socioreligious identity are highlighted through an examination of neighbors living together in a locality mixed in religion, caste, and class. Pursuing issues of community and identity, Gold turns to Gwalior's Maharashtrians and Sindhis, groups with roots in other parts of the subcontinent that have settled in the city for generations. These groups function as internal diasporas, organizing in different ways and making distinctive contributions to local religious life. The book concludes with a focus on new religious institutions invoking nineteenth-century innovators: three religious service organizations inspired by the great Swami Vivekenanda, and two contemporary guru-centered groups tracing lineages to Radhasoami Maharaj of Agra. Gold offers the first book-length study to analyze religious life in an ordinary, midsized Indian city, and in so doing has created an invaluable resource for scholars of contemporary Indian religion, culture, and society.

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