



Tamil Geographies: Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India (Hindu Studies)

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How perceptions of land and space influence social and aesthetic conditions in the Tamil region of India.

This interdisciplinary work explores how people in the Tamil region of India think about space and land, and how this, in turn, influences the creation of the social and aesthetic world they live in. Contributors focus on the notion of geography in its strictest sense, on verbal descriptions of land and space and how these descriptions build and inform diverse social and aesthetic realities. The essays examine “texts” drawn from a range of time periods and a variety of sources in Tamil culture, including imaginative literature, historical events and narratives, religious rituals, and daily life in contemporary Tamil Nadu. The book clearly demonstrates the ways in which early Tamil aesthetic and linguistic paradigms have survived to the present as living, vital expressions through which contemporary boundaries and social identities are shaped and constructed.

“...a wonderfully coherent volume that enables an exploration of continuities and disjuncture over time in the Tamil interdigitation of space, personhood, and emotion.” — *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*

“...a fascinating collection of essays.” — *Journal of Oriental Research*

“A valuable collection of essays.” — *Religious Studies Review*

“This excellent book represents an important contribution to the cultural constructions of space. Through a series of reflections on ways in which people of Tamil Nadu have conceptualized and created and enacted space, over a long period of roughly two millennia, the volume offers a vivid longitudinal portrait based in one particular cultural region.” — Richard H. Davis, Bard College

“This is a fascinating collection on conceptions of space in Tamil culture treated from quite varying perspectives. The essays cohere wonderfully, and the reader emerges with a sense of the vibrant reality of this category and of its fluid nature. I found many intriguing and unexpected ideas throughout.” — George L. Hart, University of California at Berkeley

Contributors include Daud Ali, Isabelle Clark-Decès, Norman J. Cutler, Sara Dickey, D. Dennis Hudson, Diane P. Mines, Samuel K. Parker, Indira Viswanathan Peterson, Susan Seizer, and Martha Ann Selby.

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