



Nectar Gaze and Poison Breath: An Analysis and Translation of the Rajasthani Oral Narrative of Devn-ar-aya.n (South Asia Research)

Aditya Malik

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This book offers a detailed study of the oral narrative of Shri Devnarayan along with the first English translation of this popular Rajasthani folk narrative. The narrative extolling the deeds of Lord Devnarayan is performed by itinerant singers during all night vigils in front of a 9-meter long, elaborately painted cloth scroll that depicts scenes and characters from the story. Aditya Malik uses the narrative to explore and ask a range of innovative questions relevant to the study of Indian folk culture and Hinduism as a whole: How is orality conceptualized and practiced? What is the relationship between spoken and visual signs? How do Devnarayan's devotees create multiple discourses concerning religion, community, and history within and through the medium of the narrative? Malik's analysis suggests that the narrative provides a framework for establishing linkages between different communities, past and present, spoken word and visual image, as well as contending religious ideologies. His interpretation is interspersed with excerpts from interviews with devotees and singers, other tales and texts, and observations from his field research that together invoke the worlds created by the narrative.

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