

Saptamatrkas in Indian Religion and Art



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Reviews

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(Lisette Schimmel)

SAPTAMATRKAS IN INDIAN RELIGION AND ART

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Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995. N.A. Book Condition: New. Viii+119pp The book attempts to make a historical enquiry into the origin of the seven goddesses both as a collective entity and as individual divinities, different stages in the evolution and development of their worship, regional ramifications in their cult, typological variations in their iconography by Agamic injunctions and the nature of esoteric and Tantrik practices associated with them. This is the first detailed work on the subject based on hundreds of in situ sculptures and specimens in every museum in India relevant to the subject. In terms of area and period covered, this work attempts to be extensive; the evidence examined ranges from the seals of the Harappan Civilization to plastic representations of the medieval period by which time the cult got integrated with the then established and more elaborate cult of Amba at several places; and the sculptures that are discussed are from every area in the sub-continent significant for the subject. Though archaeological material is thus by far the most copious source, literary works, particularly Puranic accounts, are also judiciously used to arrive at inferential details of a sustainable nature. Intended primarily for researchers and scholars this work will also be of interest to those evincing a general curiosity and interest in the complex strands that go by the collective name of Hinduism.

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