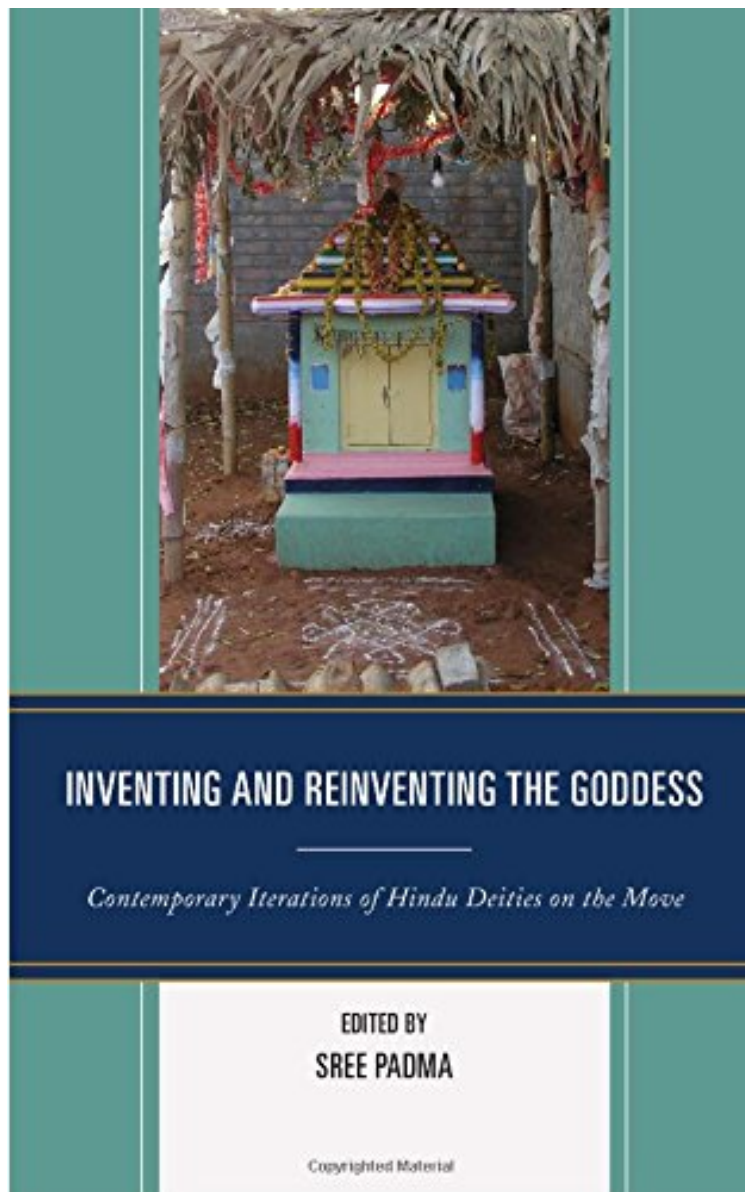


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## Inventing and Reinventing the Goddess: Contemporary Iterations of Hindu Deities on the Move

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## and Reinventing the Goddess: Contemporary Iterations of Hindu Deities on the Move:

Popular religion in village India is overwhelmingly dominated by goddess worship. Goddesses can be nationally well-known like Durga or Kali, or they can be an obscure deity who is only known in a particular rural locale. The origins of a goddess can be both ancient with many transitions or amalgamations with other cults having occurred along the way and very recent. While some have tribal origins, others sprout up overnight due to a vivid dream. *Inventing and Reinventing the Goddess: Contemporary Iterations of Hindu Divinities on the Move* looks at the nature of how and why goddesses are invented and reinvented historically in India and how social hierarchy, gender differences, and modernity play roles in these emerging religious phenomena.

In this edited volume, Sree Padma brilliantly introduces the comparative study of contemporary local goddesses as a crucial window on India today that has previously been underrepresented in scholarship. Worship of the goddess in many forms in India is one of the world's oldest continuous traditions, and *Inventing and Reinventing the Goddess* shows how and why, by providing lucid discussion of the many ways in which communities have invested and reinvested local goddesses with a diversity of contemporary concerns. Each chapter's detailed case study breaks new theoretical ground in our understanding of the vital synergy that emerges wherever and whenever people connect local and global in the figure of the goddess. (Karen Pechilis, Drew University) I am struck by how well this book brings out the vitality of South Asian goddess traditions, particularly in their mobility and the responses they elicit in new situations. These authors have looked for divinity in surprising places, and enriched the possibilities for deepening what we think we know. (Alfred Hildebeitel, George Washington University) About the Author Sree Padma is executive director of the Inter-Collegiate Sri Lanka Education (ISLE) Program and research assistant professor in Asian studies at Bowdoin College.