



Pandita Ramabai's American Encounter: The Peoples of the United States (1889)

Pandita Ramabai

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"... [A] rare and remarkable insight into an Indian woman's take on American culture in the 19th century, refracted through her own experiences with British colonialism, Indian nationalism, and Christian culture on no less than three continents.... a fabulous resource for undergraduate teaching." —Antoinette Burton

In the 1880s, Pandita Ramabai traveled from India to England and then to the U.S., where she spent three years immersed in the milieu of progressive social reform movements of the day. Born into a Brahmin family and widowed while still young, she converted to Christianity while in England. In India, she was an activist for the education of women and the improvement of the status of widows. Abroad, she was iconized as a champion of the "oppressed Hindu woman." *The Peoples of the United States* is Ramabai's comprehensive description of American life, ranging from government to economy, education to domestic activity. As an account of a Western society by an Indian woman and a feminist, it reverses the established equation of male, Orientalist travel narratives. First published in Marathi in 1889, it is offered here in an elegant and engaging English translation by Meera Kosambi, who also provides a critical introduction and extensive annotations.

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