



Nityasumangali: Devadasi Tradition in South India

Sasakiya C. Kersenboom

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It studies what the devadasi tradition meant and its transformation into a living cultural phenomenon in the context of Hindu Tradition. Author has first investigated the concept of the Devadasi as found in the cultural history of South India. The functions and forms of the Devadasi tradition are also examined within the Temple Ritual. Data from Sanskrit Agamas, commentaries, Tamil Sources, informant's accounts and form the actual repertoire of the Devadasis have been woven into a coherent structure.

The phenomenon of the devadasi has suffered greatly from faulty, culture-bound evaluations. The present monograph does not aim at judging these earlier evaluations, nor does it claim to give a truly objective description of what the devadasi tradition was; it rather tries to follow the inherent mode of thought, namely, what the devadasi tradition meant within the frame of Hinduism and its transformation into a living cultural phenomenon functioning significantly in the context of the Hindu tradition.



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