

# **India: A Sacred Geography**

Diana L Eck



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In *India:* A Sacred Geography, renowned Harvard scholar Diana Eck offers an extraordinary spiritual journey through the pilgrimage places of the world's most religiously vibrant culture and reveals that it is, in fact, through these sacred pilgrimages that India's very sense of nation has emerged.

No matter where one goes in India, one will find a landscape in which mountains, rivers, forests, and villages are elaborately linked to the stories of the gods and heroes of Indian culture. Every place in this vast landscape has its story, and conversely, every story of Hindu myth and legend has its place. Likewise, these places are inextricably tied to one another—not simply in the past, but in the present—through the local, regional, and transregional practices of pilgrimage.

*India:* A Sacred Geography tells the story of the pilgrim's India. In these pages, Diana Eck takes the reader on an extraordinary spiritual journey through the living landscape of this fascinating country –its mountains, rivers, and seacoasts, its ancient and powerful temples and shrines. Seeking to fully understand the sacred places of pilgrimage from the ground up, with their stories, connections and layers of meaning, she acutely examines Hindu religious ideas and narratives and shows how they have been deeply inscribed in the land itself. Ultimately, Eck shows us that from these networks of pilgrimage places, India's very sense of region and nation has emerged. This is the astonishing and fascinating picture of a land linked for centuries not by the power of kings and governments, but by the footsteps of pilgrims.

*India:* A Sacred Geography offers a unique perspective on India, both as a complex religious culture and as a nation. Based on her extensive knowledge and her many decades of wide-ranging travel and research, Eck's piercing insights and a sweeping grasp of history ensure that this work will be in demand for many years to come.



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