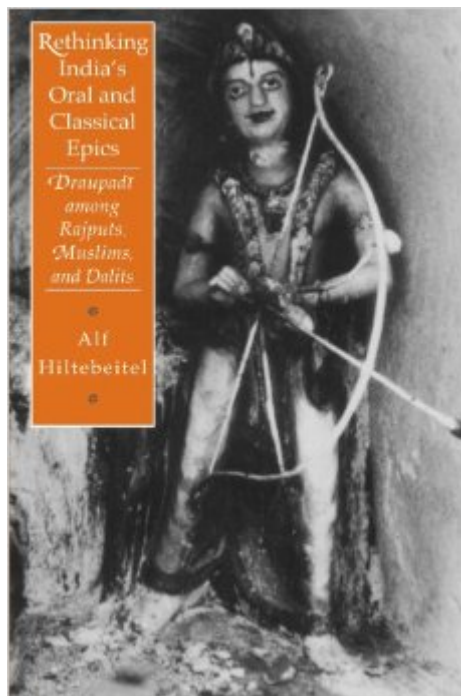


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Synopsis

Throughout India and Southeast Asia, ancient classical epicsâthe Mahabharata and the Ramayanaâcontinue to exert considerable cultural influence. Rethinking India's Oral and Classical Epics offers an unprecedented exploration into South Asia's regional epic traditions. Using his own fieldwork as a starting point, Alf Hiltebeitel analyzes how the oral tradition of the south Indian cult of the goddess Draupadi and five regional martial oral epics compare with one another and tie in with the Sanskrit epics. Drawing on literary theory and cultural studies, he reveals the shared subtexts of the Draupadi cult Mahabharata and the five oral epics, and shows how the traditional plots are twisted and classical characters reshaped to reflect local history and religion. In doing so, Hiltebeitel sheds new light on the intertwining oral traditions of medieval Rajput military culture, Dalits ("former Untouchables"), and Muslims. Breathtaking in scope, this work is indispensable for those seeking a deeper understanding of South Asia's Hindu and Muslim traditions. This work is the third volume in Hiltebeitel's study of the Draupadi cult. Other volumes include Mythologies: From Gingee to Kuruksetra (Volume One), On Hindu Ritual and the Goddess (Volume Two), and Rethinking the Mahabharata (Volume Four).

Book Information

Series: Religion & Postmodernism S

Paperback: 574 pages

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press; 1 edition (May 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0226340511

ISBN-13: 978-0226340517

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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