



Alcohol Culture and Indian Temples

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Drawing on his current research on alcohol and drug culture in premodern South Asia, James McHugh explores the presence (and absence) of aspects of drink and drug cultures in Hindu and Buddhist temples in South Asia. One might think of drinking houses and temples as utterly antithetical spaces in the Indian context, yet aspects of the culture of drink and drugs are present, at least as visual representations, in some temples from the first millennium CE. Texts of the same period describe a variety of drinking places and modes of drinking, all of which are associated with particular social contexts and textual genres. Which of these styles of drinking do we see on the walls of temples, and what sorts of drinking are thus “brought into” some temples, and why?