

Sati



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著者:Major, Andrea 编

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Sati, the burning of a Hindu widow on her husband's funeral pyre, has always been a sensational issue and a highly controversial act. Always exceptional and effecting only a tiny minority of Hindu widows, it has remained close to the surface of social and political life and has played a disproportionately prominent role within Indian history and culture. The importance given to this rite in 'Western' accounts of India since the fifteenth century, as well as the significance of its 'ethos', if not its actual practice, within Indian culture, has meant that sati has remained in the public eye for several centuries and has taken on a variety of different meanings at different times, and for different observers. This anthology explores some of these multiple meanings of sati by bringing together a wide range of both Indian and European historical sources on sati, spanning many hundreds of years.

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