

**THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
INDIA. THE VILLAGE
GODS OF SOUTH INDIA**

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The Religious Life of India. The Village Gods of South India by Henry Whitehead

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HENRY WHITEHEAD

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THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF INDIA

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

THE purpose of this series of small volumes on the leading forms which religious life has taken in India is to produce really reliable information for the use of all who are seeking the welfare of India. Editor and writers alike desire to work in the spirit of the best modern science, looking only for the truth. But, while doing so and seeking to bring to the interpretation of the systems under review such imagination and sympathy as characterize the best study in the domain of religion to-day, they believe they are able to shed on their work fresh light drawn from the close religious intercourse which they have each had with the people who live by the faith herein described; and their study of the relevant literature has in every instance been largely supplemented by persistent questioning of those likely to be able to give information. In each case the religion described is brought into relation with Christianity. It is believed that all readers in India at least will recognize the value of this practical method of bringing out the salient features of Indian religious life.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF INDIA

THE VILLAGE GODS OF
SOUTH INDIA

BY THE
RIGHT REVEREND HENRY WHITEHEAD, D.D.,
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PREFACE

THE material for this account of the village gods of South India has been gathered almost entirely from my own observation and inquiry. I have been able to get little help from books, as this is, I think, the first attempt at dealing systematically with this aspect of Indian religion. It does not pretend to be anything like an exhaustive account of all the various rites and ceremonies observed in the worship of the village deities. The variety of ritual and ceremonial in the different districts of South India is almost endless, and I have not attempted in this book to give an account even of all the various ceremonies that have come within my own knowledge. Perhaps it would be more correct to call the book "An Introduction to the Study of the Village Gods of South India." I believe, however, that all the main types of this particular form of Hinduism are included in the following pages, and that enough has been said to enable the reader to get a fairly complete idea of its general character and to compare it with similar forms of religion in other parts of the world.

I have to acknowledge the kindness of the Editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After* for allowing me to reprint in Chapters IV, VI, and VII portions of articles contributed by me to that Magazine. I owe the drawings from which illustrations have been made to Mrs. Whitehead; while Miss Stephen, the Archdeacon

of Madras, and other friends have most kindly supplied me with the photographs used for that purpose ; and the Government of Madras has generously allowed me to use the plates for some of the illustrations which previously appeared in a bulletin that I wrote some years ago for the Madras Museum.

A Glossary of Indian Terms and several Indices have been included in order to facilitate reference to the large amount of unfamiliar detail which the book contains.

HENRY MADRAS.