



Worldly Gurus and Spiritual Kings: Architecture and Asceticism in Medieval India

Prof. Tamara I. Sears

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This pioneering book is the first full-length study of the *matha*, or Hindu monastery, which developed in India at the turn of the first millennium. Rendered monumentally in stone, the matha represented more than just an architectural innovation: it signaled the institutionalization of asceticism into a formalized monastic practice, as well as the emergence of the guru as an influential public figure. With entirely new primary research, Tamara I. Sears examines the architectural and archaeological histories of six little-known monasteries in Central India and reveals the relationships between political power, religion, and the production of sacred space. This important work of scholarship features scrupulous original measured drawings, providing a vast amount of new material and a much-needed contribution to the fields of Asian art, religious studies, and cultural history. In introducing new categories of architecture, this book illuminates the potential of buildings to reconfigure not only social and ritual relationships but also the fundamental ontology of the world.

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