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The Triumph of the Goddess: The Canonical Models and Theological Visions of the Devi-Bhagavata Purana (Suny Series in Hindu Studies)

C. MacKenzie Brown

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The authors of the Devi-Bhagavata Puranendeavored to demonstrate the superiority of the Devi over competing masculine deities, and to articulate in new ways the manifold nature of the Goddess. Brown's book sets out to examine how the Puranpursues these ends. The Devi-Bhagavata employs many ancient myths and motifs from older masculine theologies, incorporating them into a thoroughly "feminized" theological framework. The text also seeks to supplant older "masculine" canonical authorities. Part I of Brown's study explores these strategies by focusing on the Puran's self-conscious endeavor to supersede the famous VaisBhagavata Puran

The Devi-Bhagavata also re-envisions older mythological traditions about the Goddess, especially those in the first great Sanskritic glorification of the Goddess, the Devi-Mahatmya. Brown shows in Part II how this re-envisioning process transforms the Devi from a primarily martial and erotic goddess into the World-Mother of infinite compassion.

Part III examines the Devi Gita, the philosophical climax of the Puranmodeled upon the Bhagavad Gita. The Devi Gita, while affirming that ultimate reality is the divine Mother, avows that her highest form as consciousness encompasses all gender, thereby suggesting the final triumph of the Goddess. It is not simply that She is superior to the male gods, but rather that She transcends Her own sexuality without denying it.

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