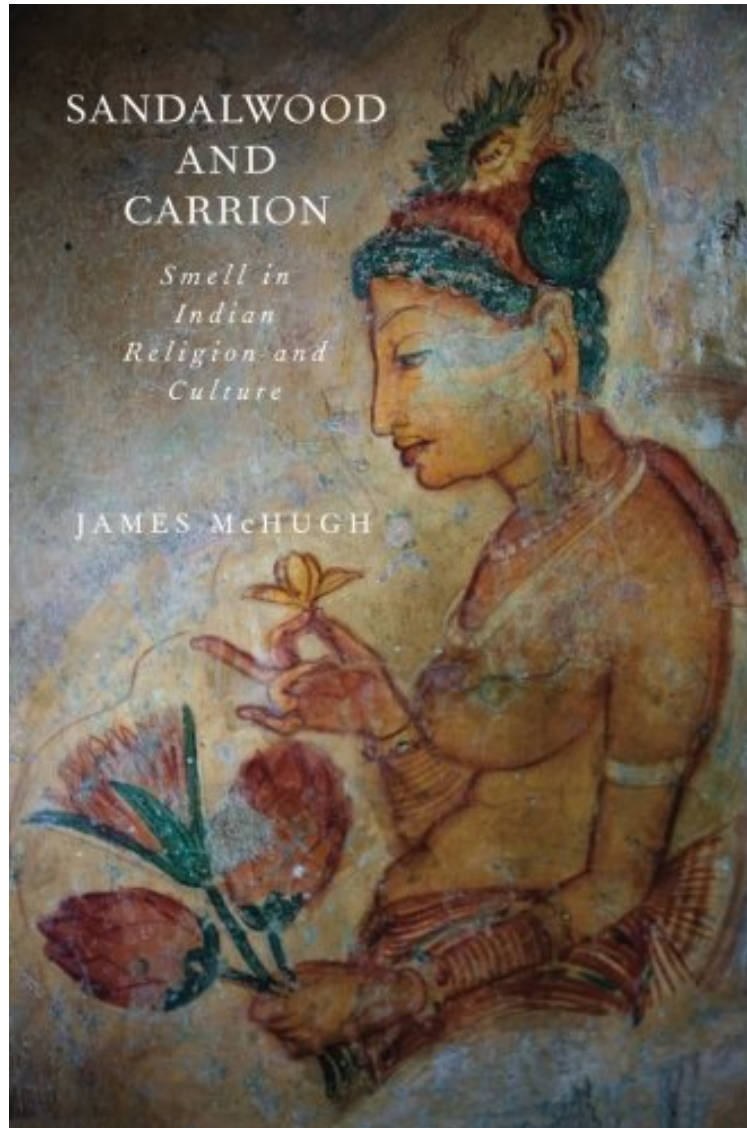


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Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture

James McHugh

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James McHugh : Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A valuable but not an easy read! By Siddha108 NOT everyone's cup of tea because of the extremely! academic tone, the resources are important to know about, and if read determinedly, it offers a realistic, though necessarily vague, view through the mists of millenia to the very earliest Asian use of

scent. Since I am a 40 year meditator, I am particularly interested in historical references to "perfumes" and the Gods. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book By PDCA must read. If you love smell, you love this great book. I enjoyed it from beginning to the end.

James McHugh offers the first comprehensive examination of the concepts and practices related to smell in pre-modern India. Drawing on a wide range of textual sources, from poetry to medical texts, he shows the significant religious and cultural role of smell in India throughout the first millennium CE. McHugh describes the arts of perfumery developed in royal courts, temples, and monasteries, which were connected to a trade in exotic aromatics. Through their transformative nature, perfumes played an important part in every aspect of Indian life from seduction to diplomacy and religion. The aesthetics of smell dictated many of the materials, practices, and ceremonies associated with India's religious culture. McHugh shows how religious discourses on the purpose of life emphasized the pleasures of the senses, including olfactory experience, as valid ends in themselves. Fragrances and stench were analogous to certain values, aesthetic or ethical, and in a system where karmic results often had a sensory impact—where evil literally stank—the ethical and aesthetic became difficult to distinguish. Through the study of smell, McHugh strengthens our understanding of the vital connection between the theological and the physical world. Sandalwood and Carrion explores smell in pre-modern India from many perspectives, covering such topics as philosophical accounts of smell perception, odors in literature, the history of perfumery in India, the significance of sandalwood in Buddhism, and the divine offering of perfume to the gods.

"[McHugh] has produced a model for other like-minded works on realia. Highly recommended." --Journal of the American Oriental Society "Sandalwood and Carrion is a heady Odyssey of the olfactory, an exquisite and consummate study of smell in early India, drawing on an array of Sanskrit texts. It is thoroughly informative and comprehensive... The author has a nose for the topic and a gift for wafting his curiosity in the reader's direction. Countless minutiae reveal their hidden aroma. The overall effect is a new perspective on premodern South Asian experience in its elusive particularity.... The author really accomplishes something daring, and through the elegance and felicity of the prose, the work becomes in equal parts information and intoxication... He is an elegant and entertaining writer whose powers of evocation make it a pleasure to learn about a topic both so dizzyingly vast and minute." --Indian Economic and Social History "This book is destined to become a classic in the fields of Indology and South Asian social and cultural history. Not only will it inspire coming generations of scholars, but it will have them longing for their own jars of yaksa mud and pairs of sandalwood slippers." --American Historical "[A] book that will long stand out for bringing the text back in after the embodied turn in the history of religion, and doing so with the utmost erudition and nuance..." --Journal of the American Academy of Religion "A brilliant and engaging study of a completely original subject. McHugh's writing is thoughtful and sophisticated, and his book opens up a whole new dimension of understanding South Asian culture. Sandalwood and Carrion exemplifies an exciting new vitality current in classical Indian studies, and stimulates us all to think of fresh questions and strategies in our scholarship." --Dominik Wujastyk, University of Vienna "This is a book that will irrevocably change the way Indologists and Buddhist scholars working on India will read their texts. They will no longer be able to skip over the rich and complex references to smells--both good and bad--that are met with at every turn in so many of their sources." --Gregory Schopen, Rush C. Hawkins University Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University "An interdisciplinary approach that draws on religion, history, material culture, anthropology and art history... Highly recommended." - _CHOICE "Creative and well written, the work explores a huge selection of literature... Each chapter opens up multiple facets of the physiology, aesthetics, social function, and economics of smell... Because of the richness of his sources and the breadth of his scope, historians of religion, literature, transnational exchange, technology, and medicine will equally benefit from reading McHugh." --Bulletin of the History of Medicine "While there have been many minor investigations of realia in a range of areas, McHugh's book is, to my knowledge, the first that chooses one specific area and investigates it in as comprehensive manner as possible... Highly recommended." --Journal of the American Oriental Society About the Author James McHugh studied philosophy at the University of Cambridge before becoming interested in the study of Sanskrit and religion in India. After pursuing a master's degree in Indian religions at the University of Oxford, he received a Ph.D. from Harvard, researching the history of smell and perfumery in pre-modern India.