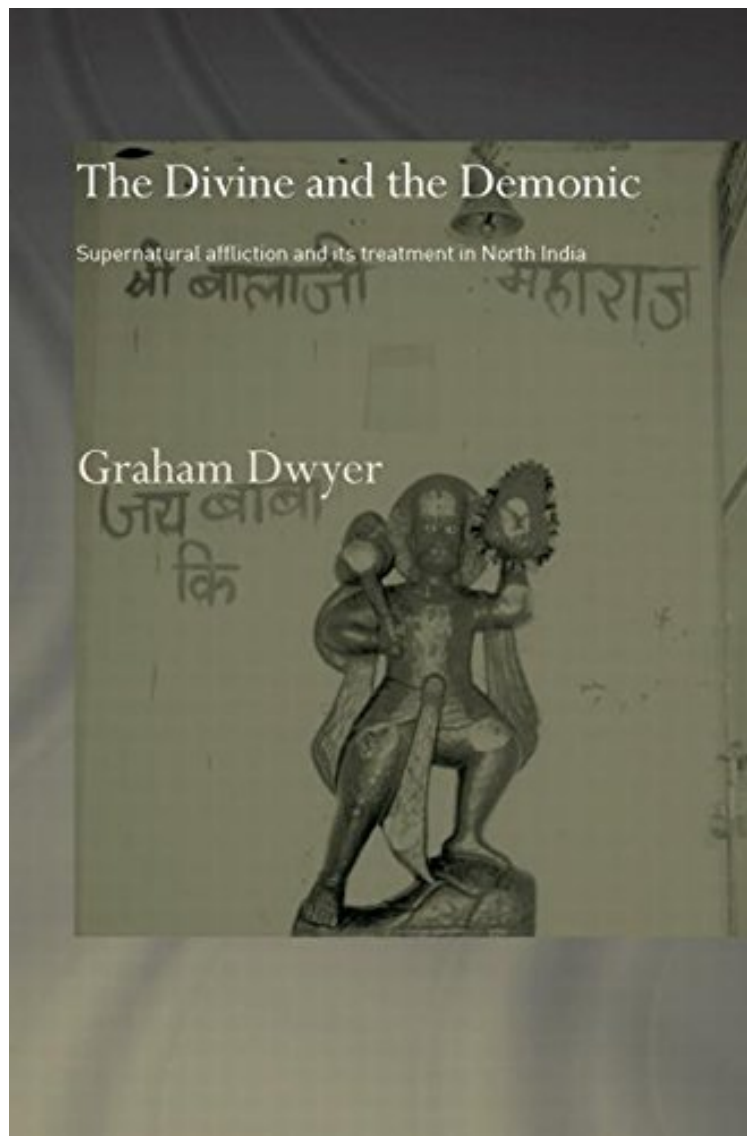


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The Divine and the Demonic: Supernatural Affliction and its Treatment in North India (Routledge Studies in Asian Religion)

Dr Graham Dwyer

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Studies in Asian Religion):

Based on fieldwork in the north Indian state of Rajasthan, this book focuses on supernatural affliction - illness and misfortune ascribed to demonic spirits or ghosts and to other mystical agents, such as sorcerers and witches. The study augments and extends the existing scholarship on a range of issues, including inter alia beliefs about spirit possession, sorcery, witchcraft and the evil eye. The themes of ritual practice, especially exorcism or healing ceremonies, Hindu priests and curers, popular Hinduism and pilgrimage are discussed, and the anthropology of South Asia is explored with an emphasis on medical anthropology and Indian ethnomedicine. At a theoretical level, the book sharply contrasts with much of the literature on spirit possession or on supernatural affliction and its treatment, as the author's phenomenological orientation involves movement away from psychological or psychiatric paradigms as well as from other forms of Western rationalism that have tended to dominate scholarly work. The book thus offers fresh insights, both in terms of understanding supernatural malaise and its treatment, and in terms of the application of the approach the author engages.

This book...reflects the author's year (1992-1993) of research on possession and healing at the well-known Balagji temple in Mehndipur, Rajasthan, an increasingly important pilgrimage site frequented by healers and the distressed from all over northern India..Frederick M. Smith, University of Iowa