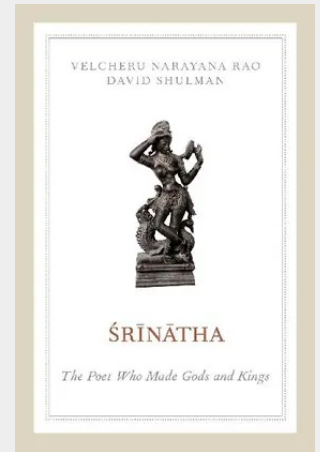


Srinatha

The Poet Who Made Gods and Kings

David Shulman and Velcheru Narayana Rao offer a groundbreaking cultural biography of Srinatha, arguably the most creative figure in the thousand-year history of Telugu literature. This fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poet revolutionized the classical tradition and effectively created the classical genre of sustained, thematically focused, coherent large-scale compositions. Some of his works are proto-novellas: self-consciously fictional, focused on the development of characters, and endowed with compelling, fast-paced plots. Though entirely rooted in the cultural world of medieval south India, Srinatha is a poet of universal resonance and relevance. *Srinatha: The Poet who Made Gods and Kings* provides extended translations of Srinatha's major works and shows how the poet bridged gaps between oral (improvised) poetry and fixed literary works; between Telugu and the classical, pan-Indian language of Sanskrit; and between local and trans-local cultural contexts. Srinatha is a protean figure whose biography served the later literary tradition as a model and emblem for primary themes of Telugu culture, including the complex relations between sensual and erotic excess and passionate devotion to the temple god. He established himself as an "Emperor of Poets" who could make or break a great king and who, by encompassing the entire, vast geographical range of Andhra and Telugu speech, invented the idea of a comprehensive south Indian political empire (realized after his death by the Vijayanagara kings). In this wide-ranging and perceptive study, Shulman and Rao show Srinatha's place in a great classical tradition in a moment of profound cultural transformation.

This groundbreaking cultural biography of Srinatha, arguably the most creative figure in the thousand-year history of Telugu literature., shows how the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poet revolutionized the classical tradition and effectively created the classical genre of sustained, thematically focused, coherent large-scale compositions. Some of his works are proto-novellas: self-consciously fictional, focused on the development of characters, and endowed with compelling, fast-paced plots. Though entirely rooted in the cultural world of medieval south India, Srinatha is a poet of universal resonance and relevance. Narayana Rao and Shulman provide extended translations of Srinatha's major works and show how the poet bridged gaps between oral (improvised) poetry and fixed literary works; between Telugu and the classical, pan-Indian language of Sanskrit; and between local and trans-local cultural contexts. This wide-ranging and perceptive study reveals Srinatha place in a great classical tradition in a moment of profound cultural transformation.



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