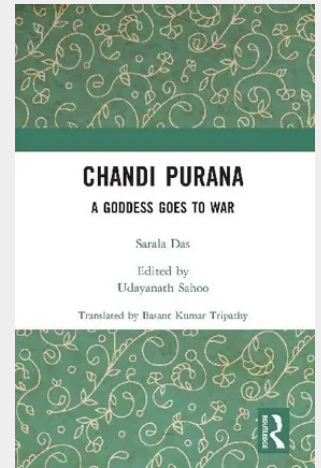


Chandi Purana

A Goddess Goes to War

This book is the English version of Chandi Purana, written in Odia by Sarala Das. Indigenous and secular, the Chandi Purana is a shastra for laymen, a bold step towards fulfilling their right to knowledge. Based on the legend of Durga's incarnation of Chandi, as narrated in the Vishnu Purana, Sarala Das's Chandi Purana, written in Odia, marks the beginning of the era of classical Odia literature. It is not, however, just a renewed vernacular edition of an old story told in Sanskrit long ago; its objective is to communicate one of the great themes of Indian mythology to the common folk whom myth marginalizes and history excludes. And in doing so, the poet administers certain changes, based on local religions, beliefs, and customs. He introduces the Odia legend of Chandi by interpreting her as Sarala Chandi of Kanakpur, Odisha, where she has been 'worshipped for one lakh and thirty-two thousand years of Kaliyuga'. Second, in Sanskrit texts, the story is told by Sage Medha to King Suratha and Samadhi Vaisya. In Chandi Purana, Sage Shuka is the narrator and King Parikshit is the listener, which reflects the poet's adherence to Vaishnavism. Essentially, a war story, it presents Durga not only as a goddess in war, but also as a mother figure who tears apart the patriarchal frame in which women are treated as subordinates.

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