



Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir

Mridu Rai

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Disputed between India and Pakistan, Kashmir contains a large majority of Muslims subject to the laws of a predominantly Hindu and increasingly "Hinduized" India. How did religion and politics become so enmeshed in defining the protest of Kashmir's Muslims against Hindu rule? This book reaches beyond standard accounts that look to the 1947 partition of India for an explanation. Examining the 100-year period before that landmark event, during which Kashmir was ruled by Hindu Dogra kings under the aegis of the British, Mridu Rai highlights the collusion that shaped a decisively Hindu sovereignty over a subject Muslim populace. Focusing on authority, sovereignty, legitimacy, and community rights, she explains how Kashmir's modern Muslim identity emerged.

Rai shows how the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was formed as the East India Company marched into India beginning in the late eighteenth century. After the 1857 rebellion, outright annexation was abandoned as the British Crown took over and princes were incorporated into the imperial framework as junior partners. But, Rai argues, scholarship on other regions of India has led to misconceptions about colonialism, not least that a "hollowing of the crown" occurred throughout as Brahman came to dominate over King. In Kashmir the Dogra kings maintained firm control. They rode roughshod over the interests of the vast majority of their Kashmiri Muslim subjects, planting the seeds of a political movement that remains in thrall to a religiosity thrust upon it for the past 150 years.

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