Water histories of South Asia: the materiality of liquescence (/review/10.5860/CHOICE.217038)
ed. by Sugata Ray and Venugopal Maddipati Routledge, 2019
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This beautifully produced volume, printed on fine glossy paper, is a joy to hold and read. Ray (Univ. of California, Berkeley) and Maddipati (Ambedkar University Delhi, India) have put together a luxurious book of 14 chapters and 122 plates, in both black and white and color, to explore the material culture of water in oceans, dams, rivers, and lakes, from antiquity to the present. Offering great food for thought, they analyze such topics as the central role of great rivers, none more so than the Yamuna and Ganges; the healing power of water in Sufi shrines; the mystical link to water in both Hinduism and Islam—even examining the experience of a darshan, a sacred viewing of the river; and the impact of the Mughals, British colonial rule, and Nehruvian development schemes, among many other fascinating topics. The collection concludes with an examination of contemporary trends, conveying that enormous population pressures and rapid and unsustainable urban development have led to acute water shortages, including the drying up of wells and the poisoning of streams and other water sources. “Anthropocene Extinction” is consequently underway. This is a wonderful contribution by Routledge and the contributors.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All readership levels.

Recommendation: Highly recommended
Readership Level: All Readership Levels
Interdisciplinary Subjects: Asian and Asian American Studies (/search?q=&ints[]=asa)
Subject: Social & Behavioral Sciences - History, Geography & Area Studies - Asia & Oceania (/search?q=&sbj[]=asos)
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