**The Multivalence of an Epic: Retelling the Ramayana   
in South India and Southeast Asia**

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The Rāmāyaṇa traditions of South India and Southeast Asia are examined at multiple levels in this volume. The research presented here offers in-depth investigations of chosen moments in the development of the epic tradition together with broader trends that help in understanding the epic’s multivalence. The journey and localization of the Rāmāyaṇa is explored in its manifold expressions – from classical to folk, from temples and palaces to theatres and by-lanes in cities and villages, and from ancient to modern times. Regional Rāmāyaṇas from different parts of South India and Southeast Asia are placed in deliberate juxtaposition to enable a historically informed discussion of their connected pasts across land and seas. The three parts of this volume, organized as visual, literary, and performance cultures, discuss the sculpted, painted, inscribed, written, recited, and performed Rāmāyaṇas. A related emphasis is on the way boundaries of medium and genre have been crossed in the visual, literary, and performed representations of the Rāmāyaṇa. These are rewarding directions of research that have thus far received little attention. Bringing together 19 well-known scholars in Rāmāyaṇa studies from Cambodia, Canada, France, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, UK, and USA, this thought-provoking and elegantly illustrated volume engages with the inherent plurality, diversity, and adaptability of the Rāmāyaṇa in changing socio-political, religious, and cultural contexts and with shifting norms, tastes, traditions, and ideologies.







