



# Playing Host to Deity: Festival Religion in the South Indian Tradition

*Paul Younger*

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The annual festivals that are central to the south Indian religious tradition are among the largest religious gatherings found anywhere in the world. Most are located at Hindu temples, but some are at Buddhist, Christian, or Islamic centers, and many involve people or symbols from more than one religious tradition. To an observer, the activities of a festival may seem chaotic, but the participants consider the activities the ritual focus of a distinct religious experience, and frequently testify that it is in the activity of a festival that they find their most profound sense of religious meaning. Here, Younger offers a fieldwork-based study of fourteen different religious festivals, shedding light on not only their religious, but also their social and political meanings.



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