



# Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India (South Asia Research)

*Allison Busch*

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**Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India (South Asia Research)** Allison Busch  
This in-depth study of the classical Hindi tradition brings the world of Mughal-era poetry and court culture alive for an English readership. Allison Busch draws on the perspectives of literary, social, and intellectual history to elucidate one of premodern India's most significant textual traditions, documenting the dramatic rise of a new type of professional Hindi writer while providing critical insight into the motives that animated this literary community and its patrons.

Busch examines how *riti* literature served as an important aesthetic and political resource in the richly multicultural world of Mughal India, and provides, for the first time in a Western language, a detailed study of the fascinating oeuvre of Keshavdas, whose seminal *Rasikpriya (Handbook for poetry connoisseurs, 1591)* was the catalyst for a new Hindi classicism that attracted a spectacular following in the leading courts of early modern India. The circulation of Hindi literature among diverse communities during this period is testament to a remarkable pluralism that cannot be understood in terms of the nationalist logic that has constrained modern Hindi and Urdu to be "Hindu" and "Muslim" languages since the nineteenth century. With the cultural reforms ushered in by colonialism, north Indians repudiated the classical traditions of the courtly past, a complex process given extended treatment in the final chapter.

Busch provides valuable insight into more than two centuries of Hindi courtly culture. *Poetry of Kings* also showcases the importance of bringing precolonial archives into dialogue with current debates of postcolonial theory.

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