Worldly Gurus and Spiritual Kings: Architecture and Asceticism in Medieval India. By TAMARA I. SEARS. New Haven: YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2014. Pp. 300, illus. $75.

The book under review is clearly the result of years of dedicated and painstaking fieldwork, documentation, research, and careful writing. It brings much needed attention to a genre of architecture, the Śaiva monastic complex, definable on a spectrum bookended by the "permeable" ascetic's retreat and the monumental, enclosed monastery (cf. chapter 3). These structures, though already documented in the nineteenth century by the nascent Archaeological Survey of India, have nevertheless been in the shadow of temple architecture in the scholarship on ancient and medieval India.[1] From the beginning, the work emphasizes the tandem development of monasteries and temples, with the former often preceding and eventually supporting the foundation of places of worship (p. 9). It thus provides a salutary correction to prevalent scholarly methodologies, which currently tend to treat temple architecture in isolation. The book merits wide readership by all investigators of medieval India including historians of art and architecture, religion, politics, and culture, not only because it brings to light a little known corpus of material and epigraphic evidence, but also because of the further questions it raises in the process.

The introduction and chapters 1–2 thoroughly inform the reader about the protagonists of the book, the Śaiva sect of the Mattamayuras, whose monasteries proliferated between the ninth and twelfth centuries in central India. This region can be further delineated by two historical and political understandings of the geography: the area of analysis comprised ancient Gopakṣetra or Gwalior and its vicinity, ruled not by a central and localized power but by feudatories of the Gurjara-Pratihāras, paramount at Ujjain and Kannauj between the eighth and eleventh centuries; and Dāhaladeśa, roughly coinciding with the lands of the Kalachuri empire based at Tripuri, spanning the late eighth through early thirteenth centuries.

A useful overview introduces the several branches of Śaiva asceticism burgeoning during the eighth through tenth centuries, ranging from the *atimārga* or truly antinomian Kālāmukhas, to the *mantramārga* or more socially acceptable Kāpālikas and Mattamayuras (pp. 37–38). All of these strains of Śaiva doctrine and ritual presented a plethora of alternatives to the mainstream, caste-based ritual elites of Brahmans (p. 68). The ultimate triumph of Śaiva Siddhānta, the Mattamayuras' branch of Śaivism, can be attributed to two principal factors: its emphasis on temple worship and the resulting spiritual and financial investment of the laity (pp. 40, 185) and local rulers seeking association with charismatic *guru*s (spiritual preceptors), which ultimately rendered Śaiva Siddhānta a "state religion" (p. 41). Indeed, by the tenth century, Mattamayura institutions administered lands and collected revenue, thus functioning as "centers of textual production" (p. 66) as well as, supposedly, representatives of state authority (p. 42). This last point will be discussed further below.

Chapters 3 through 5 contain a close analysis of the material remains, along with an exploration of the extent (and limit) of their dialogue with inscriptional and other textual sources. Rather than treating Mattamayura institutions monolithically, the author makes valuable microscopic as well as macroscopic distinctions in the architecture and its landscape, thereby fully tracing the order's developmental arc. First she explores the dyadic relationship between hinterland retreat and urban monastery in ninth-century Mattamayura identity formation and operation within Gopakṣetra (chapters 3 and 4), where the absence of a strong, localized power possibly afforded the sect a perceptible political sway in the region. During the tenth century Kalachuri patronage of the Mattamayuras and their eastward expansion into Dāhaladeśa had a variety of consequences for the order (chapter 5). Perhaps the most noteworthy of these was the preceptors' elevation to *rājaguru*s (royal priests), which signified that they had effectively displaced the Brahman *rājapurohita*s who traditionally fulfilled the role of palace priests anointing the king's military and other endeavors (pp. 189, 224–25). Paradoxically, this ele-

1. Another recent work remedying the historiographical bias toward temple architecture, though focusing on Buddhist monastic sites from the early centuries CE onward, is Kazi K. Ashraf's *The Hermit's Hut: Architecture and Asceticism in India* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2013).

vation in status probably compromised the political and social independence of the sect, particularly as an alternative to caste hierarchies.

The author's close analyses of the material culture of Mattamayura monastic life also lends significant insights into monastic and temple iconography—reiterating the need to consider the development of temple complexes in tandem with monasteries—and also proposes to expand the very definition of religious ritual. (Indeed, the book's productive engagement with physical remains is an exemplary demonstration of the rich potential of "objects," writ large, as purveyors of formal, social, and religious data unavailable in textual, epigraphic, or other more conventional historical sources.) Among the work's several fascinating iconographic observations, one in particular aids us in better understanding the unadorned (aniconic) and small-scale temples of northwestern and north-central India from the late tenth-eleventh centuries, precisely when temples are thought to have reached a height of monumentality and iconographic complexity. The author proposes that the mid-tenth-century temple at the Chandrehe monastic complex within Kalachuri territory was unadorned and built on a small scale due to its primary use by the site's ascetic residents rather than the area's wider lay population (cf. pp. 199–204). This explanation could also apply to other, similarly unadorned and comparatively diminutive temples, which remain little studied but survive in appreciable numbers.[2]

Perhaps one of the most important contributions of the book is its proposed expansion of the foci of religious ritual. In an analysis of Chandrehe's monastic structure (adjacent to and slightly later than the temple discussed above), the author carefully examines the building's interior iconographic program (pp. 210–23). In the entrance to one of the ground floor's principal rooms, the craftsmen borrowed traditional temple vocabulary but ingeniously adapted it to the monastery: rather than the temple's principal deity as the central element of its doorframe (*lalāṭabiṃba*), the monastic lintel is centrally pinned by a frontal standing *guru* in the teaching *mudra,* identifiable by his piled dreadlocks and flanked by a similarly recognizable disciple in profile. Rather than the *guru* himself being the focus of ritual in this room (the *guru* was worshiped as the embodiment of Śiva in other spaces), the iconography makes clear that his teaching was sacred and thus worthy of ritual recognition here. With this iconographic analysis, the author not only differentiates among the various foci of ritual throughout the monastery's more accessible spaces, she also expands our understanding of what and who (acts as well as personages) were worthy of worship during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Among the many strengths of the work are precisely the additional questions it inspires. For example, describing these monastic sites as representatives of state authority may be too great a leap of interpretation, not only due to the ambiguity (or rich polyvalence, depending on the perspective) of the surviving evidence, but also due to a lack of clarity in what is meant by "state authority." Chapter 2's extensive analysis of Mattamayura inscriptions—both as objects and texts—reveals their multifaceted significance, among other things as "royal-caliber" engagements with courtly culture in their use of pristine Sanskrit and elevated poetic references (pp. 52–53). But this hardly renders the foundations they commemorate to be embodiments of the state. Furthermore, the earlier Gopakṣetra inscriptions largely record patronage of monastic dwellings and associated temples by Mattamayura *guru*s themselves; it is only later in Dāhaladeśa, when Mattamayura preceptors had become *rājaguru*s, that inscriptions unequivocally record imperial Kalachuri support of the sites. Despite royal patronage of Mattamayura monastic sites and their large-scale projects—construction of roads (p. 202), for example, a responsibility often thought to be exclusively within the purview of a state apparatus—describing these institutions as representatives of state authority in Gopakṣetra or Dāhaladeśa causes discomfiture: the characterization negates the ongoing tension and constant negotiation between an imperial (or even local) power and the other, at times equally important, political-religious players in the region, in this case the Mattamayuras, and possibly other monastic-ascetic orders alongside them. Rather than representatives of local/imperial powers, it may be more productive—or at least less of an intellectual

2. For a treatment of aniconic temple architecture and its significance for later developments, see Alka Patel, *Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and Society during the Twelfth through Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), esp. pp. 102ff.

elision—to think of the Mattamayuras as rivals, albeit of a different stripe, for command of the laity and its spiritual-political imagination.

The book overall is also a demonstration of how much remains to be done in the scholarship on South Asia, particularly in terms of overcoming preconceived boundaries such as those between temples and monasteries, discussed earlier, and the transition into the period of Islamic political ascendancy in northern and north-central India from the last decade of the twelfth century. Precisely the spiritual-political power of the Mattamayuras led to their longevity, evidenced in the continuation of some form of ascetic life at Kadwaha (Gopakṣetra) into the early fourteenth century, well beyond the rise of Islamic rulerships (pp. 241–45). However, this very site saw the addition of a mosque sometime in the later 1300s, which the author interprets as an indication of its conversion into an Islamicate *ribāṭ*, "a fortress set up on the outskirts of an empire . . . to provide a safe place of respite for holy warriors, travelers, and traders" (p. 241). Again, this proposed functional leap for the Kadwaha monastery seems abrupt, given the presence of renunciants there only a few decades earlier, and premature in light of the available evidence. In the end, what happened to the Mattamayuras? Were the remaining followers absorbed into this new *ribāṭ* as "holy warriors" themselves, did they join other orders, or did they abandon asceticism altogether?

Such lingering questions, particularly with regard to the larger process of Islamic political ascendancy in India, are not to be leveled at this work alone. Their very presence indicates the need for new methodologies and, perhaps, new premises for investigation if more subtle answers are to be found. Indeed, the inspiration of such further lines of inquiry and changes in methodology is a commendable aspect of the work.

ALKA PATEL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Epic Tales from Ancient India: Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art. Edited by MARIKA SARDAR. San Diego: SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART, 2016. Pp. 164. $45. [Distr. by Yale Univ. Press.]

Edited by former curator Marika Sardar, *Epic Tales from Ancient India: Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art* is a catalogue that accompanies a traveling exhibition of the same name. Following stints at the Princeton University Art Museum and the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, the show's final installation was in San Diego beginning March 2018. The catalogue is one in a series of San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) publications that highlight the bequest of Edwin Binney, 3rd, heir to the Crayola Crayon fortune.[1] Over a twenty-eight year period, Binney amassed a collection in excess of 1400 South Asian paintings. Binney was notorious for his desire to construct an encyclopedic collection that encompassed examples from every school of Indian painting, spanned centuries of artistic production, and reflected the cultural and religious diversity of the subcontinent. Though his primary goal was to assemble a comprehensive collection, Binney was also able to acquire many works of extremely high quality.[2] The San Diego Museum of Art received the majority of Binney's South Asian

1. Amina Okada, *Power and Desire: Indian Miniatures from the San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3rd Collection* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2002); B. N. Goswamy and Caron Smith, *Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2005); Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, *Visiones de la India: Pinturas del Sur de Asia del San Diego Museum of Art* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2012). Prior to the bequest, two catalogues highlighting Binney's Mughal, Deccani, and Rajput acquisitions were published: Edward Binney, *Persian and Indian Miniatures from the Collection of Edward Binney, 3rd* (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1962); and W. G. Archer, *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edward Binney, 3rd* (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1968).

2. Terence McInerney, "On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings: Twentieth-Century Issues and Personalities," in *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, ed. Darielle Mason (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), 8, 11; Goswamy and Smith, 6; Quintanilla, 24.