



The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South Indi

Vidya Dehedjia

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"The Sensuous and the Sacred" focuses on the exquisite temple bronzes produced during the Chola period, a time of unparalleled creativity in the history of the Indian subcontinent. By the beginning of the tenth century, Hindu devotees began to visualize their deities as having public personas not unlike those of human monarchs. Worshipped as living entities, the deities participated in a variety of daily, weekly, monthly, and annual rituals and festivities; to fulfill these functions, portable images were required. Thus were created the spectacular temple bronzes of south India. For more than four hundred years, from the ninth to the thirteenth century, the Chola dynasty was the dominant cultural, artistic, religious, and political force in south India. During the golden age of Chola rule, music and dance, poetry and drama, philosophy and religious thought, and the arts of sculpture, bronze-casting, jewelry-making, painting, and architecture reached new heights. The temple was the center of all activity, and the Cholas built and decorated some of the most impressive temples in south India. These were primarily Hindu, though Buddhist and Jain shrines were also supported by Chola royalty. Vidya Dehejia holds the Barbara Stoler Miller Chair in Indian Art at Columbia University. Other contributors include Richard H. Davis, R. Nagaswamy, and Karen Pechillis Prentiss.



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