

Religion is often viewed as a universally ancient element of the human inheritance, but in the Western Himalayas the community of Himachal Pradesh discovered its religion only after India became an independent secular state. Based on extensive ethnographic and archival work, *Becoming Religious in a Secular Age* tells the story of this discovery and how it transformed a community's relations to its past and to its members, as well as to those outside the community. In addition, as Mark Elmore demonstrates, Himachali religion offers a unique opportunity to reimagine relations between religion and secularity. Elmore shows that modern secularity is not so much the eradication of religion as the very condition for its development. Showing us that to become a modern, ethical subject is to become religious, this book creatively augments our understanding of both religion and modernity.

"Mark Elmore delivers a very refreshing contribution to several areas: religion and secularism studies, South Asian studies, and studies of religion in the Himalayas. The book offers a grounded and exciting new way of looking at how a region with a particular colonial and postcolonial history remakes itself as a distinct region and becomes religious in the very teeth of intensifying secularist discourse and policy."

LEELA PRASAD, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Duke University

"An important piece of work that helps us unlearn some of our most tenacious assumptions about religion and modernity. In addition, it makes a positive contribution by considering what it means—for religion, for people, for the gods, for a state—when religion becomes a 'problem.' By writing this book, Elmore moves to a different, sounder level of thinking about religion; reading this book would help the rest of us to do the same."

ANN BURLEIN, Professor of Religion, Hofstra University

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