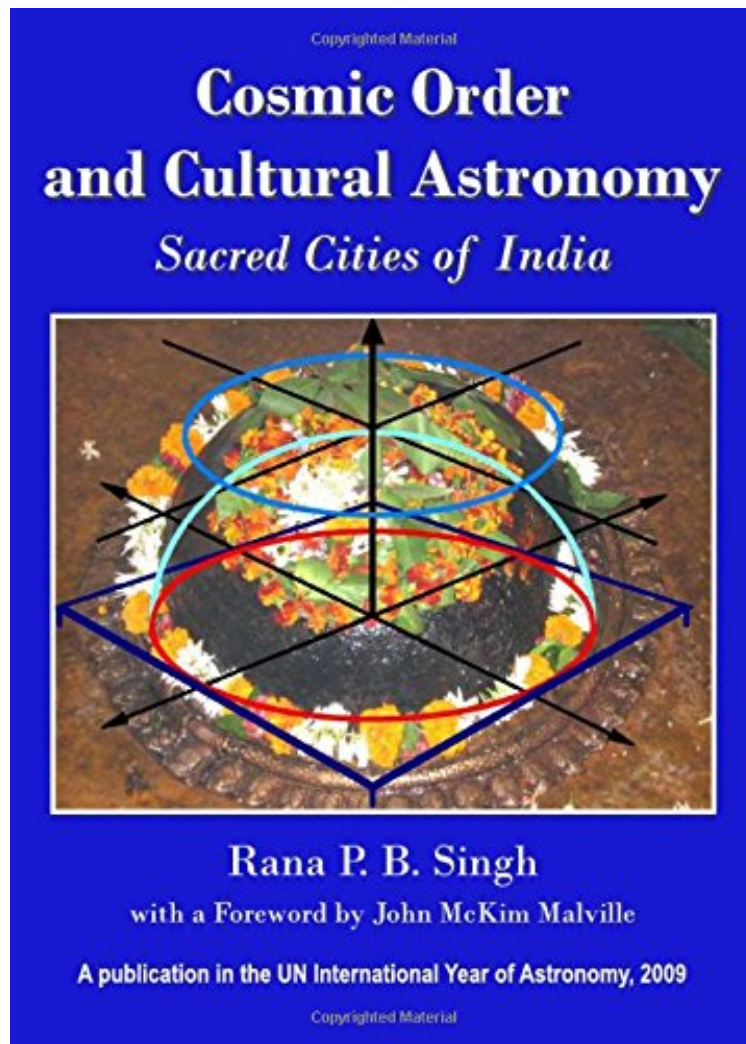


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Cosmic Order and Cultural Astronomy: Sacred Cities of India (Planet Earth Cultural Understanding)

Rana P.B. Singh

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Rana P.B. Singh : Cosmic Order and Cultural Astronomy: Sacred Cities of India (Planet Earth Cultural Understanding) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cosmic Order and Cultural Astronomy: Sacred Cities of India (Planet Earth Cultural Understanding):

Throughout the Indian subcontinent there are territories and areas wherein culture, geography, and the archetypal

cosmos interact with each other to create a sacredscape that is infused with meaning, cultural performances and transcendent power. These sacred sites possess extensive mythological associations where believed that spirit can cross between different realms. In a broad perspective such studies falls within the realm of cultural astronomy, which has two broad areas, viz. archaeoastronomy, concerned with the study of the use of astronomy and its role in ancient cultures and civilizations; and ethnoastronomy that studies the use of astronomy and its role in contemporary cultures. The seven essays in this volume deals with the critical appraisal of studying cultural astronomy and cosmic order and its implications in India, illustrated with case studies like heritagescape of Khajuraho, where stone speaks; manescape of Gaya, where manes come and bless the devotees; Deviscape of Vindhyachal, where goddess resorts; Shivascape of Kashi, where Shiva dances in making order; Shaktiscape of Kashi, that possesses the spatial ordering of goddesses; and Naturscape of Chitrakut, where mother earth blesses.

Working together with the author over the last fifteen years, I realised the comprehensiveness and interrelatedness of geography in shaping and creating the sacredscapes and ritualsapes that have now considered as a way for new vision in the era of New Age. The results presented here are based on co-sharing and deeper interaction that were presented in several papers during last two decades, however the essays are updated, revised and expanded with a fresh writ of integrity, harmony, cultural astronomical reflections, and profusely illustrated design and figures to which Rana Singh is a master craftsman. In the UN International Year of Astronomy (2009) this book will serve as sparking star for new thoughts from India --Prof. John McKim Malville, Emeritus Professor, Astrophysics Planetary Sciences, University of Colorado, Boulder, U.S.A About the Author Rana P.B. Singh, Professor of Cultural Geography Heritage Studies at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (India), and has published extensively on geographical thought, sacred geography, pilgrimage studies and heritage planning in India. His publications include 35 books and anthologies and over 180 research papers. On these themes he gave lectures in almost all parts of the world. His recent publications include Environmental Ethics (1993), The Spirit and Power of Place (1994), Cultural Landscapes and the Lifeworld (2004), Uprooting Geographical Thought in India: Toward Ecology and Culture in 21st Century (2009), Geographical Thoughts in India: Snapshots and Vision for the 21st Century (2009), Banaras: Making of India's Heritage City (2009), and Cosmic Order Cultural Astronomy (2009).