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Convergence and Collisions: Disease, Religion, and Healing in Asia

**The Ritual Containment of Serious Sickness in an Indian Medical
Vernacular**

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This paper argues that scholarly models of South Asian ethnomedicine and religion, being based on Western biomedical and philosophical assumptions about mind and body, have neglected certain medical vernaculars that are rooted in a broadly Hindu ideology. Discerned ethnographically, the patterning of responses to forms of serious sickness demonstrates conceptual continuity across diverse divine and mundane etiologies. This material suggests a different set of criteria through which the dangers of sickness are contained and managed from those to be found in the elite, codified South Asian medical traditions. The paper then asks: But is this 'healing'?