

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910811497903321
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Titolo	Making virtuous daughters and wives : an introduction to women's Brata rituals in Bengali folk religion / / June McDaniel
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New York, : State University of New York Press, c2003
ISBN	0-7914-8765-2 1-4175-0860-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (145 p.)
Disciplina	294.5/38
Soggetti	Vratas Hinduism - Rituals Bengali (South Asian people) Folklore - India - West Bengal Hindu women - Religious life - India - West Bengal West Bengal (India) Religious life and customs
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 125-127) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Notes on Spelling, Transliteration, and Pronunciation -- Introduction -- Folk Hinduism In West Bengal -- The Folk Goddess Tushu, Her Festival, Songs, And Brata -- What Is a Brata? -- Some Bengali Bratas to Goddesses -- Other Bratas: Women, Nature, Gods, and Magic -- Brahmanical Bratas: The Rituals for Men -- Conclusion -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Exploring the folk religion of India and the role of girls and women within it, author June McDaniel focuses on the brata (vrata) ritual in which moral lessons are taught and goddesses are revealed. Bratas are performed to gain such goals as a healthy family, a good husband, and a happy life. They are also performed so that the performers (bratinis) develop such virtues as devotion, humility, and compassion. This book presents data from fieldwork, along with brata stories, songs, poems, and ritual activities. It discusses Bengali folk religion, offers an example of ritual worship in folk Hinduism, and surveys a variety of bratas. The author analyzes the similarities and differences among these rituals in low-caste village life and in high-caste Hindu tradition, and notes that

the development of these rituals involves a form of continuing divine revelation with women as the primary transmitters. Bratas act to maintain traditional Hindu values, but also emphasize the power of women, whose virtues can save their husbands from hell worlds and their families from disasters.
