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Frontmatter
More information

Sex and the Family in Colonial India

In the early years of the British empire, cohabitation between Indian women and British men was commonplace and to some degree tolerated. However, as Durba Ghosh argues in a challenge to the existing historiography, anxieties about social status, appropriate sexuality, and the question of who could be counted as "British" or "Indian" were constant concerns of the colonial government even at this time. By following the stories of a number of mixed-race families, at all levels of the social scale, from high-ranking officials and noblewomen to rank-and-file soldiers and camp followers, and also the activities of indigenous female concubines, mistresses, and wives, the author offers a fascinating account of how gender, class, and race affected the cultural, social, and even political mores of the period. The book makes an original and signal contribution to scholarship on colonialism, gender, and sexuality.

DURBA GHOSH is Assistant Professor in History at Cornell University. She has co-edited, with Dane Kennedy, *Decentering Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World* (2006).

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Durba Ghosh
Frontmatter
More information

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978-0-521-85704-8 - Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire
Durba Ghosh
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

Acknowledgments *page* ix

Introduction 1

1 Colonial companions 35

2 Residing with begums: William Palmer, James Achilles Kirkpatrick and their "wives" 69

3 Good patriarchs, uncommon families 107

4 Native women, native lives 133

5 Household order and colonial justice 170

6 Servicing military families: family labor, pensions, and orphans 206

Conclusion 246

Bibliography 257

Index 275

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Durba Ghosh
Frontmatter
More information

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Frontmatter
More information

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More information

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