



Understanding Jainism (Understanding Faith)

Lawrence Alan Babb

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Jainism is Buddhism's often overlooked cousin. As the only surviving examples of ancient India's non-Vedic religious traditions, the two religions are often grouped together as 'heterodoxies', but this is to ignore deep differences between Jain and Buddhist beliefs and practices. Unlike Buddhism, Jainism has hardly spread beyond the Indian subcontinent but Jainism survives in India where it is a prominent element in the mix of Indian religions today. As an introduction to Jainism as a religious tradition and way of life, this book pays due attention to Jainism's history and doctrinal basics. However the author emphasises the ways in which formal Jain teachings are manifested in the practices of both laity and the monastic elite; explores the distinctive Jain systems of cosmographic and biological knowledge and describes how Jainism is woven into the social identities of Jain communities in modern India.

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