



Jainism

An Introduction

Jeffery D. Long

In his welcome new treatment of the Jain religion, Long makes an ancient tradition fully intelligible to the modern reader. Plunging back more than two and a half millennia, to the plains of northern India and the life of a prince who--much like the Buddha--gave up a life of luxury to pursue enlightenment, Long traces the history of the Jain community from founding sage Mahavira to the present day. He explores asceticism, worship, the life of the Jain layperson, relations between Jainism and other Indic traditions, the Jain philosophy of relativity, and the implications of Jain ideals for the contemporary world.

"This highly readable book provides an excellent introduction to an ancient and complex tradition that predates the birth of the Buddha. The author skillfully explores Jain doctrines regarding the nature of the soul and the observance of nonviolence, placing Jainism within the context of Hinduism and Buddhism. He also highlights the influence that Jainism had upon the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. The book corrects misperceptions that have characterized Jain ethics as extreme, and discusses how Jainism is being practiced globally, including in the US heartland."--Christopher Key Chapple, Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

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