



Jaina Law and Society (Routledge Advances in Jaina Studies)

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The struggle for the legal recognition of the Jain community in India as a religious minority from 1992 onwards has generated a renewed interest in Jaina law and an intense debate on the question of Jain identity in the context of the wider question of the interface between religion, society, law and politics in contemporary South Asia. This book analyses contemporary Jain identity and legal status in India.

Chapters in this book, written experts on the subject, address the following issues: How do Jains themselves define their identity and customs privately and collectively in different situations and to what extent are such self-definitions recognised by Hindu law? In what way does the understanding of the social identity of lay Jains and their identification as 'secular' Hindu or 'religious' Jain differ in various Jain communities? The book explores these aspects which differ in accordance to the Jain representatives' distinct doctrinal interpretations, forms of organisation and legal and ethical codes. It presents the social history of Jain law and the modern construction of Jainism as an independent religion on the basis of legal documents, biographies, community histories and ethnographies, disputes over religious sites, and interviews with contemporary community leaders in both north and south India. The book fills a gap in the literature and will be an essential resource for researchers interested in Jainism, Indian religions, Indian history, Religious Studies and Law.

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