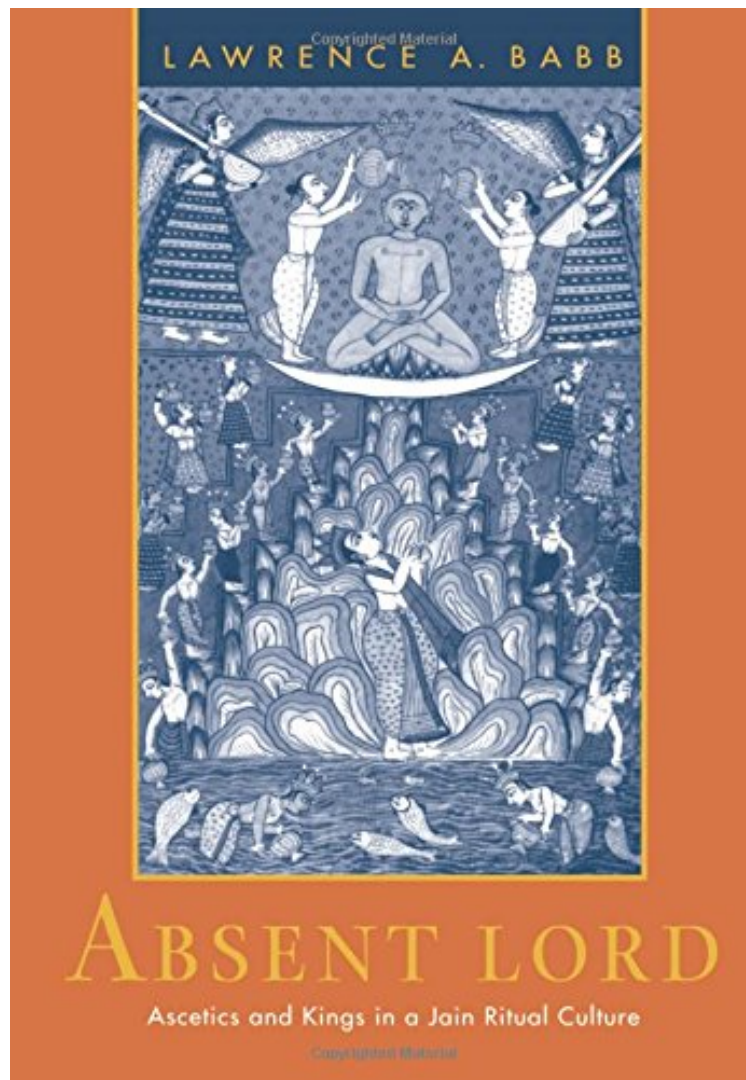


[Ebook pdf] Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society)

## Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society)

Lawrence A. Babb

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Lawrence A. Babb : Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society):

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. An excellent answer to a fascinating question By Blah In this work, Babb asks an interesting question. Why would Jains fast and starve themselves when they believe that the

beings they worship are not only unaware of their existence but also can in no way help them even if they wanted? It is a fascinating book that explores this as well as ritual in Jain culture. It is based mostly on the author's work in India. It is quite descriptive and can be understood by all as he explains many aspects of Jainist thought. In addition to describing the various rituals in play, the author also gives a very thorough explanation of the dieties and their roles. Furthermore, he effectively compares Jainism with Hinduism and Buddhism making the distinction much clearer. This is a difficult task when dealing with Indian religions. Finally, Babb does an excellent job of incorporating the ideas and stories of the people he interviewed into the work.

What does it mean to worship beings that one believes are completely indifferent to, and entirely beyond the reach of, any form of worship whatsoever? How would such a relationship with sacred beings affect the religious life of a community? Using these questions as his point of departure, Lawrence A. Babb explores the ritual culture of image-worshipping Svetambar Jains of the western Indian states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Jainism traces its lineages back to the ninth century B.C.E. and is, along with Buddhism, the only surviving example of India's ancient non-Vedic religious traditions. It is known and celebrated for its systematic practice of non-violence and for the intense rigor of the asceticism it promotes. A unique aspect of Babb's study is his linking of the Jain tradition to the social identity of existing Jain communities. Babb concludes by showing that Jain ritual culture can be seen as a variation on pan-Indian ritual patterns. In illuminating this little-known religious tradition, he demonstrates that divine "absence" can be as rich as divine "presence" in its possibilities for informing a religious response to the cosmos.

From the Back Cover  
Absent Lord sheds light on a little-known religious tradition and demonstrates that divine 'absence' can be as rich as divine 'presence' in its possibilities for informing a religious response to the cosmos.  
About the Author  
Lawrence A. Babb is Professor of Anthropology at Amherst College and author of *Redemptive Encounters: Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition* (California, 1986).