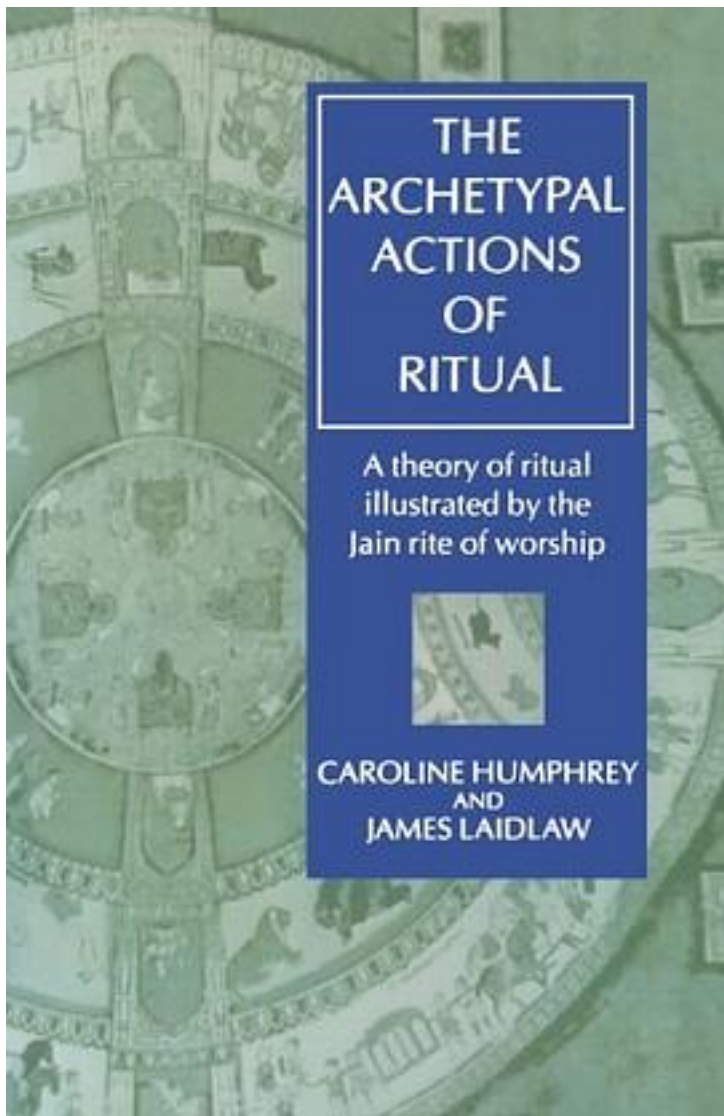


The Archetypal Actions of Ritual



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Religious rituals can provoke a deeply ambiguous reaction in those who practise them. What happens in religious traditions when the nature of the ritual is questioned, but the practice of performing rituals is not itself abandoned? This book draws on the authors' observations of such reactions among Jains in western India, and asks why they can tell us about ritual as a universal mode of human action. Most anthropologists have assumed that ritual is a special kind of happening, which requires a special kind of interpretation. The authors argue that 'ritual' is a quality which can in principle apply to any kind of action. The question they try to answer is: what is distinctive about actions which are ritualized? They reject the common view that ritual carries intrinsic meaning, and explore the apparent paradox that ritualization, which makes action in an important sense non-intentional, is itself the result of an intentional act - the adoption by the actor of what the authors call the 'ritual commitment'.

作者介绍:

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