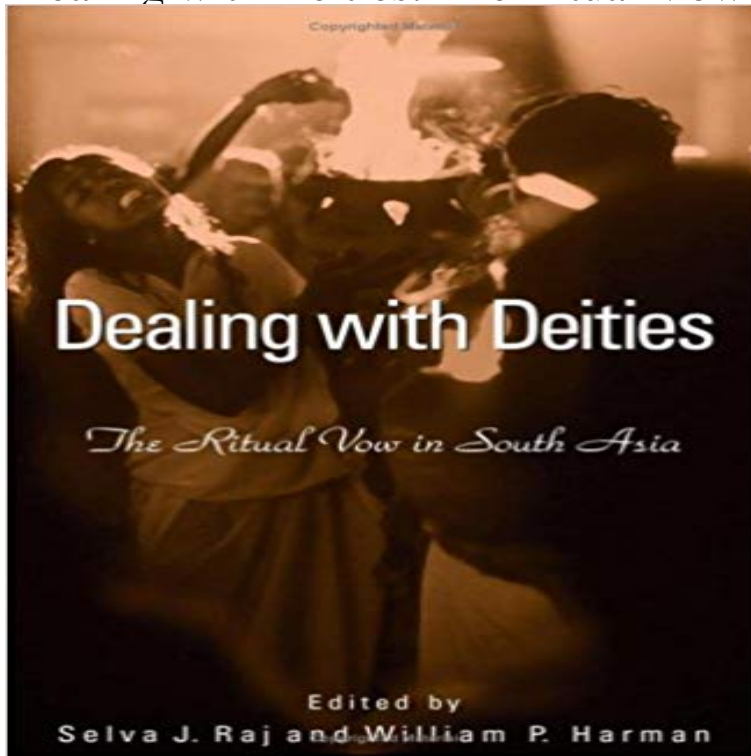


Dealing with Deities: The Ritual Vow in South Asia



Drawing on original field research, *Dealing with Deities* explores the practice of taking ritual vows in the lives of ordinary religious practitioners in South Asia. The cornerstone of lay religious activity, vow rituals are adopted by Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs who wish to commit themselves to ritually enacted relationships with sacred figures in order to gain earthly boons and spiritual merit. The contributors to this volume offer a fascinating look at the varieties and complexities of vows and also focus on a unique characteristic of this vow-taking culture, that of resorting to deities and shrines of other religions in defiance of institutional directives and religious boundaries. Richly illustrated, the book explores the creativity of South Asian devotees and their deeply felt convictions that what they require, they can achieve faithfully and independently by dealing directly with deities.

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