The aim of these two volumes is to bring together a representative selection of the writings of Edmund Leach (1910-1989), a brilliant and prolific anthropologist known not only in his field but to the educated public at large. Leach perceived anthropology as a vital and broadly based study of the human condition, encompassing methods and ideas from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. His writings reflect the conviction that anthropology is of direct and practical importance to social policy and political debate. These two volumes present more than fifty items -- many difficult to obtain and several never before published -- displaying the considerable range of Leach's anthropological interests, the debates he provoked, and the issues he championed. Anthropology and Society contains a selection of Leach's writings on "society", taken largely though not exclusively from the early part of his career. Here his writings on social structure, social relations and social practices were heavily informed by the functionalism of Malinowski and Firth, and by an old-style ethnographer's insistence on the importance of ethnographic detail. His discussions about political institutions and about kinship were generally part of theoretical debates on how to model social systems and describe human action, and Leach was a searching critic of some of the bedrock assumptions of mid-twentieth century functionalist social theory. The volume includes some of Leach's best-known and most influential professional writings: such essays as "Rethinking Anthropology" and extracts from Political Systems of Highland Burma, persuasive re-analyses of the work of earlier anthropologists, and major statements on kinship, ritual, classification, and taboo. "Once a Knight is Quite Enough", a hitherto unpublished piece, is a vivid and amusing comparison of the ceremony in which Leach was given a knighthood and a pig-sacrifice in Borneo.


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