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EDITED BY

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PREFACE

WHEN Mr Brooke, in *Middlemarch*, stated that if he went into Parliament, he would emulate Wilberforce and work at philanthropy, 'Mr Casaubon bowed, and observed that it was a wide field.' Religion is even wider; and while this Dictionary would not be able to keep pace with Mr Brooke's 'impetuous reason', it has been written for those who wish to pause and to understand religion and religions better. Vague impressions of religion can do great harm, not least by giving offence to the adherents of religions by seeming to be casual about the things that matter to them. Even the choice of an illustration for the dust jacket of this book shows how difficult these things can be. The photograph of a Thai Buddhist meditating was chosen because it suggests a general religious atmosphere of prayer. Prayer and meditation, however, are not the same thing, and this image ignores the fact that many Buddhists regard their following of the Buddha's teaching as a non-theistic philosophy and not as a religion. It seems perhaps a trivial detail, but detail, in the case of religion, matters.

The details, however, are daunting. Each religion has a long history of its own, with its attendant people and texts and ideas. The Dictionary was planned, therefore, to help those who have an interest in religions, but who find the subject vast. At the time we began, the first-year course at Lancaster University on the Introduction to Religions had more than a hundred students on it. They, and others who come to religions for the first time, find themselves, not simply in Baudelaire's 'forest of symbols', but in a forest also of concepts, texts and practices, languages and histories, teachers and preachers, guides, gurus and gods. The purpose of the Dictionary is to provide initial bearings on new and unfamiliar ground, not just for students, but for the general reader as well. Some entries are brief, because such items as Congé d'élire or Dalmatic do not, in this context, need more than a short definition. But in most articles an attempt has been made to offer something more than a definition, so that the reader can gain some sense of what the item is and why it has been included, even though a full treatment is obviously impossible. I have attempted to give at least a few salient quotations, since these often convey more of the feeling of a belief or of a person than an abbreviated biography can do. Many of these I have translated for the purpose.

The Dictionary has been far too long in the making. It was delayed by the sheer volume of the work; even the headword lists took far longer than I had expected. It was delayed further by my return to Cambridge and by my illness. But all clouds have linings, and during this period, I have written almost exactly half the book. I have also supplied most of the brief suggestions for further reading. In a book covering so much ground in so many entries, it was clearly impossible to provide full bibliographies. The books listed are, therefore, *only suggestions*: they are limited to one or at the most two, offering a possible 'next step' for those who require further information. Some were suggested by contributors, but most come from myself, and thus represent a highly personal reading list, the illustration no doubt of a misspent life. There will surely be other and more recent books, which a library catalogue will disclose. As it is, I broke my own rule, and I have listed more than two books on a number of major topics where the pressure on space made it impossible to do more than point at a large horizon.

Pressure on space: given that there are multi-volume encyclopedias on each of the religions, and one-volume dictionaries on many, it was rash to attempt a one-volume work on the major world religions. But neither general readers nor students have a reference library beside them all the time. We therefore decided to give the maximum space to text, rather than to illustrations. Religions are expressed as much in pictures and signs as they are in words, and although entries on art and music have been included, it was out of the question to do justice to these areas in a single-volume work. There remains yet to be written a companion dictionary of religious art and music. In the mean time I have edited for Dorling Kindersley *World Religions*, which is based on illustration, and gives a glimpse of that other side of religion.

Pressure on space has also meant that a careful system of cross-reference has been used, so that information is not too often repeated. If major concepts (for example, karma) were to be explained each time they appear, we would be back with the many volumes. For the same reason, I have also compiled an Index of major themes. This has reduced the number of times an article ends with 'See also . . .' In the case of such things as cosmology or mysticism, the book would otherwise have been greatly lengthened, since each 'See also' list would have had to be repeated at the end of several entries. The making of the Index was an immense task in its own right. It was made possible, first through the generosity of Gresham College, London (who paid for both the hardware and software involved), and secondly through the skills of Dr Martin Richards, of the Computer Laboratory of Cambridge University. My gratitude to them is great indeed.

My thanks go also to many others: to the contributors, and especially for their patience in accepting the delay in publication; to Lamea Abbas Amara, Krishan Bhugtiar, David Bowker, Gene d'Aquili, Sean Hughes, and Professor C. F. D. Moule who offered advice or corrections on particular entries; to Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok for undertaking a whole area of the Dictionary when another, at a late stage, withdrew; to Dr Christopher Hancock, Dr Newman Brooks, and Dr Margaret Bowker who rescued the book, when, at the very end, promised articles failed to turn up; to Professor Roger Corless who gave me the will to go on when it seemed impossible; to Trinity College for lending me books; to the late Peter Nailor, and to Gresham College, for support and friendship; and to Dr Stephen Wroe and Mrs Sarah Brunning who, among many others, have cared for me through my illness and enabled me to take up this work again. In the early years, Dr J. F. Coakley, in addition to being a contributor, undertook the immense work which was necessary to get the whole project under way. His admirable efficiency and care laid the foundations on which the rest could be built. My thanks go also to the Press (not least, again, for their patience), to the skill of those in India who typed in a difficult manuscript, to proof-readers, and to the development editor, Pam Coote, and the copy-editor, Jane Robson. Above all, my thanks go to Alysoun Owen, and her production and design colleagues John Mackrell and Nick Clarke: this book was extremely complicated to design and set, with many substantial changes at very late stages: her dedication to getting things right has been extraordinary.

Finally, words cannot possibly express adequately my thanks to my wife Margaret. Quite apart from the entries she has written, she has sustained me at every point. It is certain that without her, the Dictionary would have been abandoned long ago. She is, in a real way, the joint-author of it.

JOHN BOWKER

Cambridge, 1996

AN AUTHORITATIVE TEAM OF EDITORS, CONSULTANTS, AND CONTRIBUTORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND ACROSS THE RELIGIOUS SPECTRUM PRESENT ALL ASPECTS OF RELIGION IN AN IMPARTIAL AND ACCESSIBLE WAY.

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John Bowker, Gresham Professor, London and Adjunct Professor at the University of Pennsylvania (formerly professor of religion at the University of Lancaster and Fellow of Trinity College, University of Cambridge), is a highly regarded authority on religious studies and a well-known broadcaster on BBC Radio and World Service. His many books on the subject include *Is God a Virus? Genes, Culture and Religion*, *Problems of Suffering in the Religions of the World*, *Voices of Islam*, and *The Meanings of Death* which received the HarperCollins Religious Book Award in 1993.

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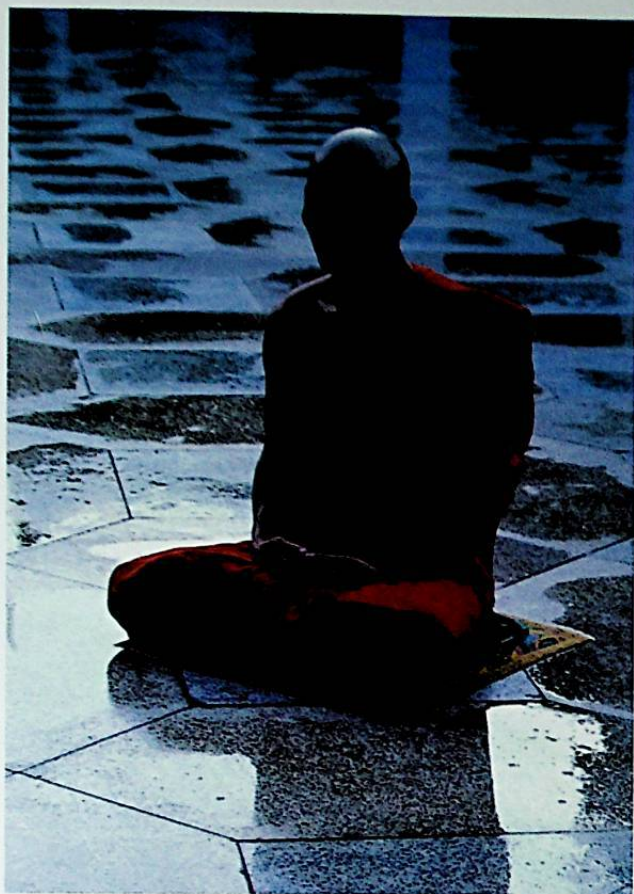
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Over 80 contributors from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, UK, and USA representing all the major faiths, are some of the leading authorities in the area of religious studies. Notable contributors include Professor K. S. Ch'en on Chinese Buddhism, Professor Julia Ching on Chinese religion, Dr Kenneth Cragg on Islam, Professor Gary L. Ebersole on Japanese religion, Dr F. E. Hardy on Indian religions, Professor H. J. Kim on Korean Buddhism, Professor M. M. J. Marasinghe on Early Buddhism, Dr Laurence G. Thompson on Confucianism.

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Religions Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism

Movements, sects, and cults more than 500 entries, including Bauls, Cargo cults, New Age, Rastafarians, ISKCON, Soka Gakkai, Hizballah

Texts books – over 1,000 listed and described, authorities, theology, scripture

Individuals founders, leaders, exponents, followers, gurus, philosophers, mystics, heretics, poets

Sacred sites cities, buildings, centres of pilgrimage

Customs practices, dogmas, beliefs, traditions, festivals and fasts, artefacts such as altars, rosaries, icons, torah ornaments, and fetishes

Ethics method and issues including abortion, animals, birth control, just war, sexuality and homosexuality, suicide

Themes on general topics relevant to all religions such as prayer, biogenetics, asceticism, confession, cosmology, art and architecture, music and dance

Accessible reference hundreds of quotations, many translated specially for this book; suggestions for further reading at the end of entries; detailed system of cross-references; alternative spellings given for words with several transliterated forms; table of Chinese headwords given in both Wade-Giles and Pin yin

Topic index listing 13,000 entries on major themes such as Brahman, breathing, death beliefs and rituals, heavens and paradises, kami, mandala, mantra, mysticism, Sufism, yoga, and Zen practice.