

Experiencing
the World's
Religions

*Tradition,
Challenge, and
Change*

MICHAEL MOLLOY



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EXPERIENCING THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Tradition, Challenge, and Change

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University of Hawai`i

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MAYFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY

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*My love to Lucy and Paul
who taught us all to dance.*

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Publisher's Foreword

The publisher would like to commemorate Alden Paine, who died in November 1997. Alden had a long and illustrious career in college publishing, and *Experiencing the World's Religions* was one of the last projects he initiated. After beginning his career with other publishers, Alden began to build Mayfield's lists in the Humanities and Social Sciences and helped to lay the foundation of the company with his work. He had a particular talent for anticipating areas of study in which new types of books would be needed, such as women's studies, death and dying, and sexuality, and for initiating texts dealing with such subjects before the courses were firmly fixed in college curricula. Alden had more than good publishing instincts, however; he devoted himself to campus work and developed strong personal as well as professional relationships with generations of teachers. We will miss Alden's creativity—and his occasional contentiousness.

We believe this dedication is an appropriate way to honor and remember a man who had a great impact on both the people and the business he loved.

Mayfield Publishing Company

Preface

I am often made aware of how intrigued students are by the study of religion. They fill the many sections of the world religions course offered at my college, and at the end of the course they invariably write in their evaluations that the course should be taken by every college student because it has made them see so many things in new ways.

The approach that I follow in this text began when I first viewed postcards and photos from Asia, Africa, and Europe collected by my artist grandmother. The cards featured some of the most colorful religious sights of the world—temples, masked dancers, paintings. Those pictures were the door through which I entered the larger world encompassed by religion. Later, in college, I saw other sides of religions—their broad intellectual content, their appreciation for rare states of emotion and understanding, their influence on cultures, and their sometimes healing, sometimes frightening power in the lives of individuals. From that point on, studying religions for me also meant exploring music, literature, philosophy, psychology, and art. I saw that religions offer ways not only to experience the world, but also to appreciate it. Since college, my investigation of religions has led me to fascinating places and to extraordinary people. As I look back on my encounters, I feel grateful for the kindness of the many who took me in even though I was a stranger. This book tries to share some of the joy that these people and experiences have brought.

With students in mind, I have been guided by several ideals in writing this book:

1. *The ideal of the educated person.* What, I ask myself, should we expect “the educated person” to know about religions? What would a person seeking to be an “educated person” actually want to know about religions? What should the study of religions lead to for those who want to continue their education? This book tries to present that essential content, then point to places, texts, and people through which more can be discovered.
2. *The ideal of clarity.* I often think of the ironic axiom, “When you see the spark of ambition, water it.” And indeed a student’s initial enthusiasm for religions can quickly be smothered by wave upon wave of specialized terms, names of goddesses and gods, significant dates, and

historical figures. Thus I have tried here to fan rather than water readers' natural inquisitiveness by emphasizing the social issues and human concerns that provide contexts for terms, names, and dates with detailed description. To enhance clarity, chapters include maps and timelines as well as key terms with definitions and pronunciation guides.

3. *The ideal of a multidisciplinary approach to religion studies.* A religion is not just a system of beliefs, but is a combination of ways in which beliefs are expressed in ceremony, food, clothing, art, architecture, pilgrimage, scripture, and social organization—to name only a few. This book tries to make the multifaceted nature of religions explicit. The photographs have been chosen to help achieve this ideal.
4. *The ideal of experience.* Religions are better understood through first-hand experience. This book invites readers both to imagine and to seek the experiences of many religions both at home and abroad. Each chapter begins with a First Encounter that encourages the reader to imaginatively apprehend some aspect of a religion. Later in each chapter a description of a personal experience suggests additional possibilities for experience. Each chapter ends with ideas for experiencing the focal religion at home and abroad.
5. *The ideal of scholarship blended with respect.* Adherents to a particular religion frequently assume that their histories and accounts of their tradition are factual, their texts unique and sacred, and their belief system true. While this inside view may be limited, it often provides adherents with deeply meaningful experiences. In contrast, scholars who study religions seek objectivity through the use of methods that emphasize proof, emotional distance, and even doubt. Their approach—although it may downplay the fact that religions belong to the heart as well as the head—provides valuable tools for making significant distinctions and seeing shared patterns. Because this is a secular textbook about multiple religions, I necessarily follow an academic approach and give precedence to the insights that come from modern scholarly inquiry. At the same time, I try to portray each religion in ways that convey some of the awareness of adherents. My hope is that, through this blending of scholarship and respect, I can accomplish the goal set forth by the book's title—to help readers understand the experience of each religion.

Supplemental materials, available to help students and teachers, include a study guide, an electronic study guide, and an instructor's manual. The study guide gives chapter summaries, learning objectives, and review questions in several formats. The unique CD-ROM Study Guide offers for each chapter: guided tours that highlight important concepts, pronunciation guides for key terms, flash cards, as well as true false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank questions, and mini-lectures that provide an in-depth study of selected concepts. The study guide can be used with either Windows- or Macintosh-based computers. The instructor's manual provides learning objectives, chapter outlines, lecture supplements, notes on using exercises in

the textbook, lists of relevant videos and websites, sample examination questions, essay topics, and pages for use as transparencies or handouts.

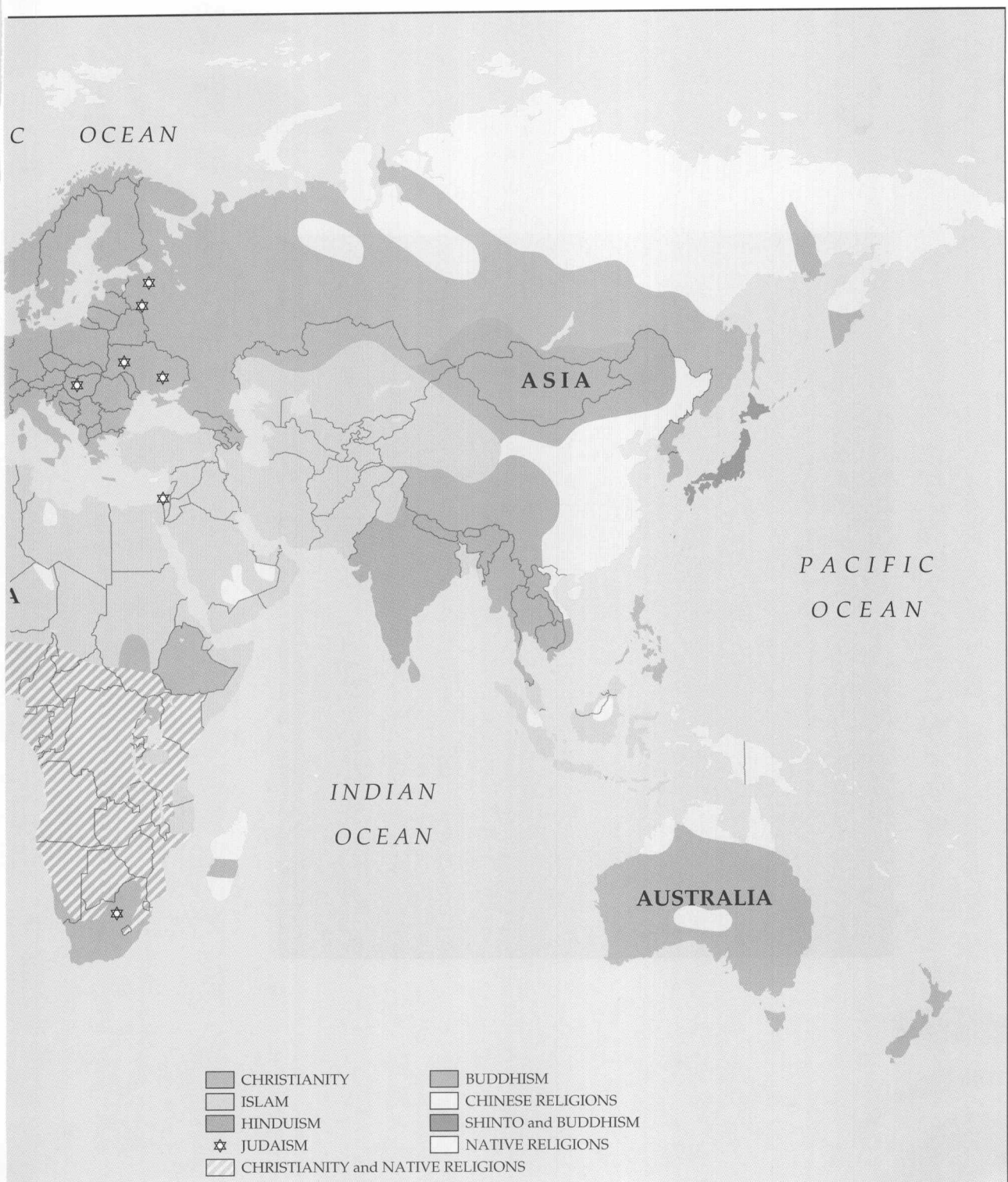
Many teachers have shared their wisdom with me; I am grateful particularly to Lucy Molloy, Walter Daspit, Winfield Nagley, Sobharani Basu, and David Kidd. I thank Thomas Hilgers for the use of many fine photographs. A grant from the East-West Center in Honolulu made possible much of the initial travel and study necessary for this book. Several monasteries were kind in allowing me to stay and participate in their life: Songgwang-sa in South Korea, Engakuzan in Japan, Saint John's Abbey in Minnesota, and Saint Andrew's Abbey in California.

This book began at the request of a legendary editor, Alden Paine, who like a good Taoist united persistence with gentleness. Work on the manuscript became like a square dance, as I was partnered at different stages with skillful editors and assistants working for Mayfield Publishing Company. Ken King guided the entire project insightfully and invited me to meet the staff in Mountain View. Sheryl Fullerton helped me to "cut to the chase" in my writing. Kate Engelberg reviewed the manuscript and selected auxiliary materials. Susan Shook worked hard to make the instructor's manual practical. Joshua Tepfer organized supplemental material for the instructor's manual. And in the earliest stage Jim Bull initiated the contract process. The student's manual was written by Richard Trussell. The CD-ROM was created by Jack Jackson. Jeff Ruff prepared the lecture supplements and Joshua Tepfer compiled and annotated the video lists for the instructor's manual. Brian Pecko did the photo research and Anna George designed the book and cover. I thank them for their collaboration and creativity. Special thanks to Carla White Kirschenbaum for her sense of beauty and her sensitivity as production editor; and to copy-editor Andrea McCarrick, whose face I never saw but whose laughter on the phone I came to know so well.

Thanks also go to these teachers and scholars who offered their ideas: Robert Platzner, CSU Sacramento; Brannon M. Wheeler, University of Washington; Thomas F. MacMillan, Mendocino College; George Alfred James, University of North Texas; Dr. D. Kerry Edwards, Red Rocks Community College; R. F. Lumppp, Regis University; Ramdas Lamb, Assistant Professor, University of Hawaii; R. C. Trussell, Pikes Peak Community College; G. David Panisnick, Honolulu Community College; Prof. Madhav M. Deshpande, University of Michigan; Robert J. Miller, Midway College; Mark MacWilliams, Saint Lawrence University; David D. Waara, Western Michigan University; John G. Spiro, Illinois Wesleyan University; Gerald Michael Schnabel, Bemidji State University; Rita M. Gross, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire; Wendell Charles Beane, University of Wisconsin—Oshkosh; Dr. Ann Berliner, CSU Fresno; and Dr. Dan Breslauer, University of Kansas. The book is far better as a result of their reviews. Because our (and my) understanding of religions is constantly expanding, I will appreciate new suggestions, and I ask readers who wish to offer any to send them to me via the publisher.

Although it is a truism, this book has been shaped by hundreds of other people who are also owed my thanks. They planted in me seeds that I hope have come to flower in this book.





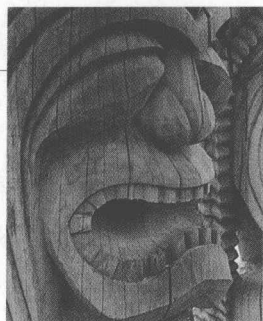
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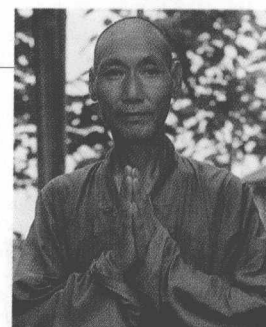
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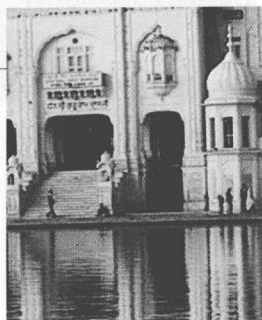
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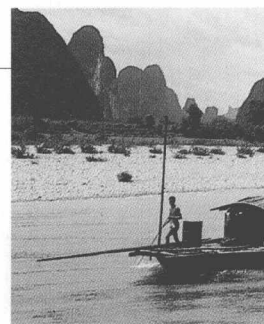
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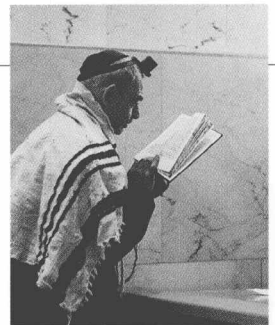
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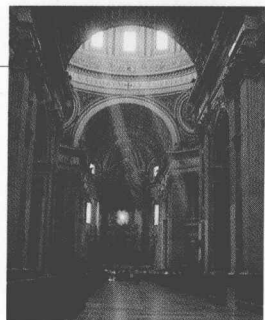
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