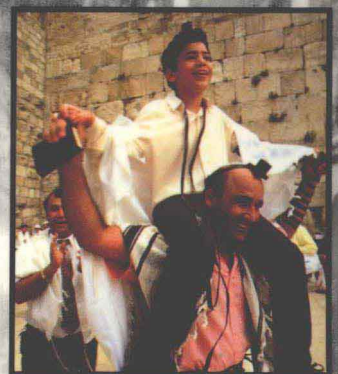
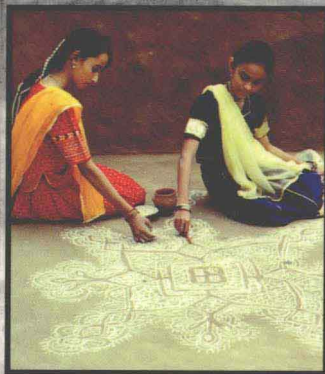


EIGHTH EDITION

# RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD



Lewis M. Hopfe  
Mark R. Woodward

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# RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

EIGHTH EDITION

Lewis M. Hopfe  
(1935–1992)

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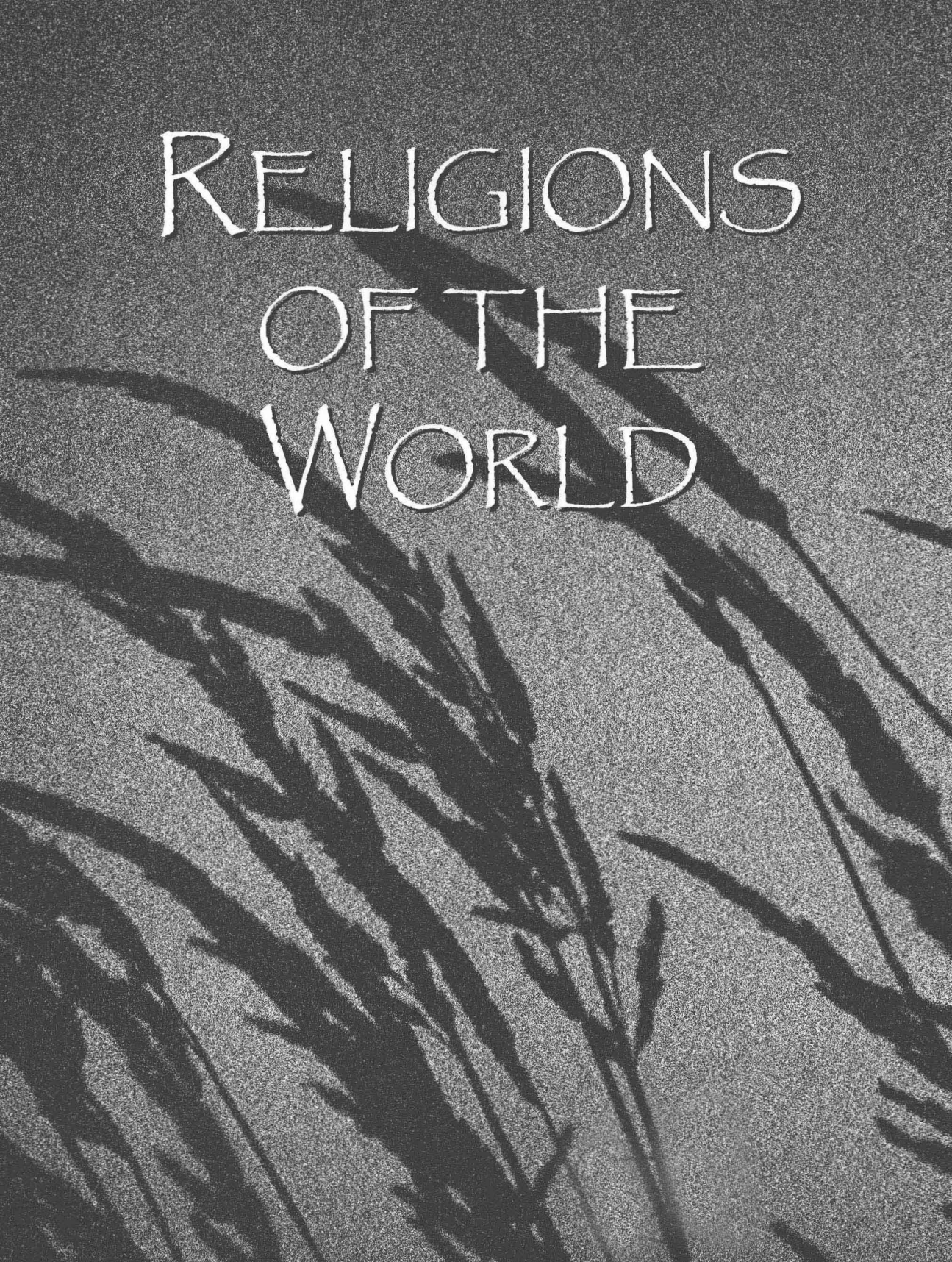
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RELIGIONS  
OF THE  
WORLD







To Michelle, Christine, Marlana, Jacob,  
Suzanne, and especially Lewis, who made it  
all possible.

# PREFACE

to the Sixth Edition

*Wherever people are found, there too religion resides.*

The study of world religions has become increasingly important in this last decade of the twentieth century. As a result of mass communications and ease of travel, individuals of varied backgrounds are coming into contact more than ever before. The Middle East is a cauldron of emotions involving Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Headlines are being made by devotees of Hinduism and Islam in India. Some of the conflicts in areas of the former Soviet Bloc nations have religious undertones. A knowledge of world religions is now essential to understanding people of various world cultures, their political systems, and the quest for world peace.

World religions is never a simple subject and can be incredibly complex and intricate for the beginning student. *Religions of the World* is written for the student who wants a concise introduction to the historical and philosophical foundations of the major living religions of the world. While this text makes no conscious effort to shortcut or simplify religions, neither does it go out of its way to delve too deeply into the technicalities. This new edition follows the same narrative style and approach that has met with such a positive response in previous editions.

Readers are first introduced to the basic vocabulary of the field and to some of the theories of the origin of religion. The text then goes on to explore the major living religions: the historical and cultural factors that produced them, the lives of their founders, their basic teachings, and their historical development and current status in the world. Selected readings from source material are included to give the student a feel for the literature of the world religions, a glossary to define difficult and foreign terms, and a suggested reading list of available, current texts which can further instruct the student. Study questions are included at the end of each chapter in order to focus the attention of the reader on the central themes of the chapter.

Changes within this new edition include a partial revision of the Judaism chapter, with the addition of a section on medieval Judaism. A new section on myths and rituals has been added to the Basic Religions chapters. Each religion chapter, other than Basic Religions, includes a new section on the major holy days and festivals celebrated by adherents of that religion.

This edition is the result of the combined efforts of many people. Before the untimely death of Dr. Lewis M. Hopfe on September 2, 1992, he had completed all of the major changes and additions, leaving the editing and final completion of the Sixth Edition to his wife, Lavinia R. Hopfe, and his son, Lewis M. Hopfe, Jr. Many thanks to Maggie Barbieri, our editor at Macmillan, Sharon Lee and Connie Geldis, also at Macmillan, Laurie Thomas for copyediting, Catherine Howard, and others who made this text possible.

Lavinia R. Hopfe  
Lewis M. Hopfe, Jr.  
for Lewis M. Hopfe

# PREFACE

to the Eighth Edition

In preparing the eighth edition of Lewis Hopfe's text, I have drawn on my experience teaching the introductory course on world religions to thousands of students over the past decade and living and working in Buddhist and Muslim societies for extended periods. I have updated the chapters on Asian religions, particularly Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, and also the one on African religions. I have attempted to leave the style of presentation and the comparative focus of the text intact. Living in Arizona for more than a decade, I have also had the good fortune to encounter a variety of Native American religious traditions and have drawn on this experience in revising Chapter 2.

Mark R. Woodward

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# INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW



*Religion: A personal awareness or conviction of the existence of a supreme being or of supernatural powers or influences controlling one's own, humanity's, or all nature's destiny.*

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