



The Joy of Sects

By Peter Occhiogrosso

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Religion is one of the oldest human activities and even in the present day pervades almost every aspect of life, but with so many seemingly incomprehensible beliefs, laws, rituals, and terminologies, you can't tell the players without a program. *The Joy of Sects* overcomes this confusion by presenting a rich trove of information in a concise, browsable format. It is a guidebook to the world's religious traditions not only for the devout follower but also for the interested outsider, for the curious unbeliever, and for anyone who ever wondered about the difference between karma and dharma, yin and yang, Talmud and Torah, the astral plane and the akashic record, Pharisees and Sadducees, Sunnis and Shiites.

Here you will find detailed narrative histories of the six great religious traditions of East and West -- Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam -- along with information about related traditions, including Sikhism, Confucianism, Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, and the various elements that compose the New Age. Each chapter contains brief sections on the scriptures, places of worship, and terminologies, as well as the numerous denominations, orders, and schools that make up the great millefleur tapestry of world religion.

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The Joy of Sects By Peter Occhiogrosso Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #583348 in Books
- Published on: 1997-09-04
- Released on: 1997-09-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.45" w x 6.15" l, 1.74 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 656 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The author states that this book is a reference work for the television and computer age, designed for easy access to names, terms, and other information about world religions. If this is the book's only purpose, it succeeds. It is a miniature encyclopedia with bite-sized definitions and explanations to aid anyone needing immediate help when confronted with a new or strange religious term or seeking more information on a religious topic that is unfamiliar. The book successfully covers Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Of special interest is a chapter on New Age religions, presently a burgeoning field. An objection to the book is its frivolous title, which may condemn this good, quick reference source to be dismissed as just another popular book on religion. Recommended for public libraries.

Glenn Masuchika, Chaminade Univ. Lib., Honolulu

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From Booklist

Comparative religion can be dry, but not the way Occhiogrosso writes it. Not only is this fat book comprehensive, it's lively and, perhaps best of all, easy to understand. Occhiogrosso, the author of *Once a Catholic* (1988), explains the world's religions so clearly and with such easy wit that even those befuddled by religious terminology--from *kosher* to *karma*--will find themselves seeing the light for the first time. The book is divided into seven chapters, one each on Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and New Age. Each chapter is then divided by such topics as history, contemporary practices, and terms, with clever subject headings like "The Mark of Zoroaster" or "Confucius Say What?" Libraries may want one copy for circulation and another for reference. An excellent resource. *Ilene Cooper*

From the Publisher

All the fundamental themes of the world's major religions--from Amish to Zen--are presented in this thorough, yet accessible study of religious tradition.

More than 30 B & W illustrations

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