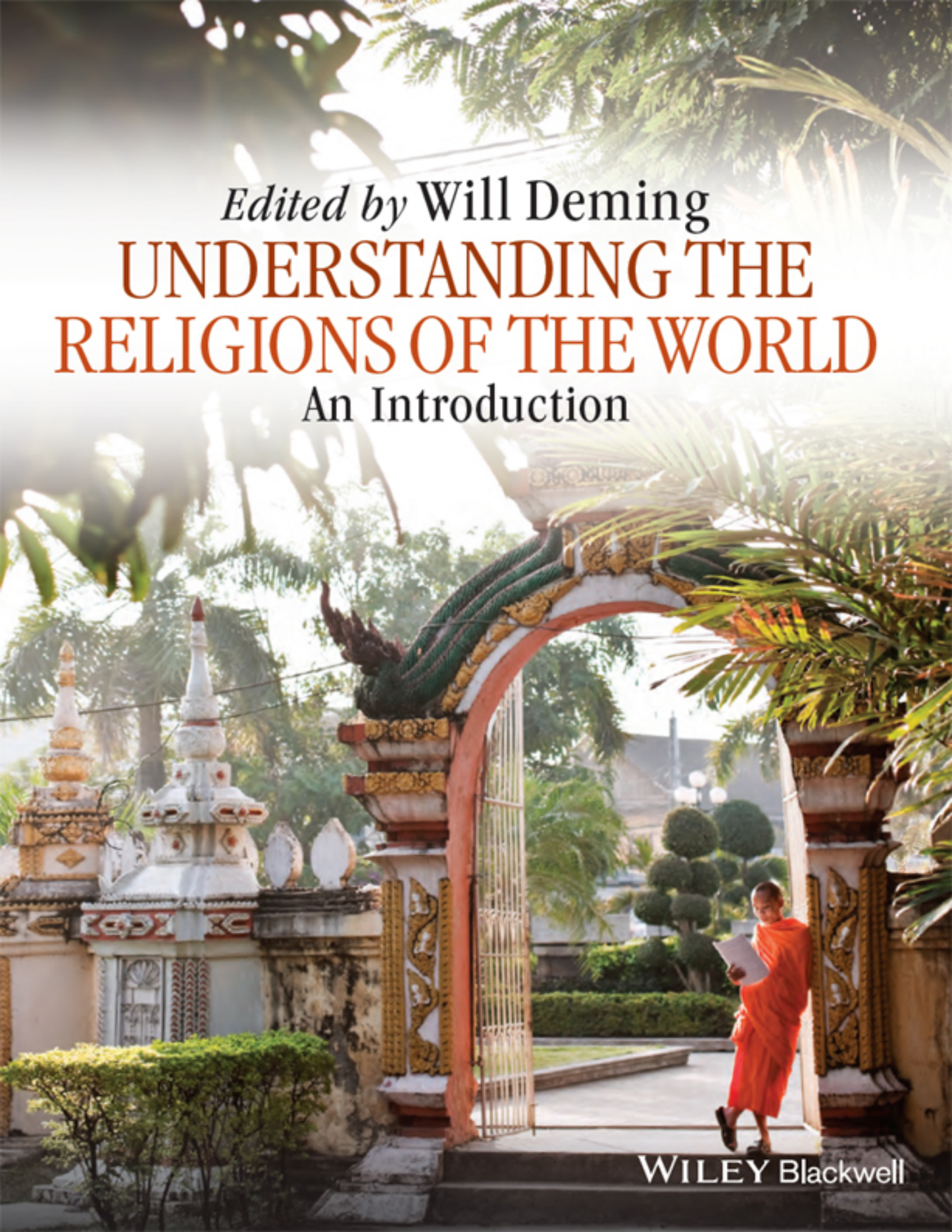




Edited by Will Deming

UNDERSTANDING THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

An Introduction

WILEY Blackwell

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Jacob K. Olupona, Harvard University

Understanding the **RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD**

An Introduction

**Edited by
WILL DEMING**

WILEY Blackwell

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The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Religions supply people with entire worlds of meaning. Understanding them takes time. Source: Will Deming.

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Chapter 1

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Chapter 3

Finding balance in the midst of change. The *luo pan*, or fengshui compass. The magnetized needle in the middle is surrounded by concentric circles which indicate the cardinal directions, the Eight Trigrams, the Ten Heavenly Stems, the Twelve Earthly branches, the Twenty-four heavenly “breaths,” family relationships, and other, even more detailed aspects of the patterns and powers of the heavens, time, and space. Source: Reproduced by permission of Lyn McCurdy.

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Mountains and Streams,” shows the dominance and yet harmonizing aspects of the Dao in the natural world. The massive rock face (*yang*) is softened by the thin cascade of water (*yin*), as two human beings (barely visible in the enlarged portion on the right) accompany a small caravan of donkeys. Minuscule by comparison, these tiny creatures are completely integrated into, and at ease with, this vast landscape. Source: Dennis Hallinan / Alamy.

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Figure 3.15 The Eastern Peak Temple (Dongyue Miao), includes 76 replicas of hell's chambers of judgment and punishment beneath the eastern summit of Mount Tai. Each chamber is designed to punish a specific sin, and punishment is administered by the jailors of hell. This chamber shows the fate of those who have lied. Relatives will hang prayer boards near the chambers they deem most appropriate for their deceased relatives in order to speed them through their punishment. Source: Reproduced by permission of Jennifer Oldstone-Moore.

Figure 3.16 A man burns incense and bows at the entrance to the temple to the City God of Shanghai. The City God, like a city mayor, is a relatively high ranking official who can be petitioned for a variety of requests. Source: Reproduced by permission of Jennifer Oldstone-Moore.

Figure 3.17 Jitong, or “divination youths,” are chosen by a god to demonstrate that god's protective power. They wield fearsome weapons and injure themselves under divine possession, but the blood stops quickly and they feel little or no pain because of the god's

care. This jitong is at the Pei-kang Mazu festival in Taiwan, and likely under Mazu's protection. Source: Reproduced by permission of Michael Oldstone.

Chapter 4

Turn to the deity in times of distress. Buddhist statues flank an ancient tree marked off as sacred space by a Shinto festoon with white streamers—an example of the regular integration of these two traditions in Japanese Religion. Source: Reproduced by permission of John Traphagan.

Figure 4.1 Known in Japanese as Nippon or Nihon, Japan is a nation of almost 7,000 islands, the largest being the four main islands of Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Hokkaido. The country is divided into 47 administrative prefectures. Of its approximately 127 million inhabitants, 98 percent are ethnically Japanese.

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Figure 4.13 Using wands made of pine branches, two men purify a path for a procession of naked men.

Source: Reproduced by permission of John Traphagan.

Figure 4.14 Two frames from a booklet entitled *Jizo*, available at many Japanese temples. The first frame depicts the souls of babies who died before birth, gathered on the river beach of Sai. After saying prayers for the relatives they will never see, they pile up small towers of stones. In the second frame, a demon threatens to torment them. In later frames their souls will be rescued by the *bodhisattva* Jizo and given peace in the afterlife. Source: Reproduced by permission of Daido Corporation, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; Creative Commons.

Figure 4.15 Jizo is the *bodhisattva* whose special role is to protect women, children, and travelers. Statues of Jizo are common along roads, and at temples where deceased children are memorialized. Source: Reproduced by permission of John Traphagan.

Chapter 5

An interconnected world. A Dogon ritual dancer in west Africa prepares to communicate with the unseen world by using a ritual mask. Source: © larum stock / Alamy.

Figure 5.1 A cave painting from Zimbabwe, dated between 8000 and 3000 BCE. It depicts a shaman with an enormous body and a tiny head, towering over various other beings. Source: Reproduced by permission of Michael C. FitzGerald, Professor of Fine Arts, Trinity College.

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Chapter 6

The power embedded in place. Uluru, or “Ayers Rock,” in central Australia. This monolith is sacred ground for Indigenous Australians. Source: Reproduced by permission of Mary N. MacDonald.

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Chapter 7

Holy covenant, chosen people. A Jewish boy prepares to become a “son of the commandment,” or *bar mitzvah*. Wearing a skullcap (*yarmulke*) and a prayer shawl (*tallit*), he holds a Torah scroll wrapped in a

velvet mantel and adorned with a silver shield and reading pointer. In the background is the case, or ark, where the scroll is kept when not in use. Source: Reproduced by permission of Mark Lewinsohn.

Figure 7.1 While many Jews now live in Israel, even more live outside the homeland in the Diaspora, especially in North America.

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 Columns of text in an open Torah scroll. Note that Hebrew runs right to left. The line to the right of the right column is the join between two pieces of leather. The detail from another Torah scroll shows some of the letters decorated with “crowns,” a convention used to mark the Torah's exceptional holiness. Torah scrolls have no punctuation, and few indications as to how words are to be vocalized. A reading pointer, or *yad* (literally “hand”) is used so as not to touch the page. This practice is explained variously as a way to keep the scroll clean, or as a consequence of a Talmudic teaching that when one touches the Torah (except in the Temple in Jerusalem) it “makes the hands unclean.” Source: Will Deming.

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Figure 7.10 A 100-shekel coin from the 1980s, reflecting the hope of some Jews that the modern homeland would be rebuilt according to ancient Jewish patterns. The monetary denomination “shekel” is found in the Bible, and the menorah stamped on the back recalls the famous lamp stand used by the Maccabean liberators to rededicate the Temple. By contrast, the word “Israel” appears in Hebrew, Arabic, and English, a reminder of the diverse

population of the emerging nation. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 7.11 An ark in the chapel of a Conservative synagogue. When closed, this ark resembles a large Torah scroll with a burning bush on its pages—an allusion to Moses' first encounter with God. The text on the bush quotes Exodus 3:2: “And the bush was not consumed” and the words above the ark state: “For out of Zion shall Torah go forth” (Isaiah 2:3). Source: Will Deming.

Figure 7.12 A boy participates in games at a Jewish summer camp, his tzitzit hanging down almost to his shoes. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 7.13 A Jewish man prays the morning prayer wearing a *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (black scripture boxes). Source: Ira Berger/Alamy.

Figure 7.14 A *mikveh*. When more “natural water” is needed, rain water is channeled through the hole that is now covered by the small wooden panel with the round handle. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 7.15 An elaborate, jeweled and gilded mezuzah reading “Shalom” (peace, wellbeing), with a hinged door and latch, so that the parchment it contains can be checked periodically. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 7.16 A girl reads from the Torah at her *bat mitzvah*, using a silver reading pointer. Source: Reproduced by permission of Paul W. Rizzo Photography.

Figure 7.17 A fanciful *yad* on its ornate carrying case. Source: Will Deming.

Chapter 8

Salvation through Jesus Christ. A Gothic altarpiece at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, showing various events in the life of Jesus, whom it calls “the Way the Truth and the Life (quoting the Gospel of John). Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.1 A map showing approximate densities of Christian populations in the world.

Figure 8.2 Maps showing the locations and approximate population densities of the three largest divisions within Christianity.

Figure 8.3 Beginning in the second or third century, Christians used a fish drawing to express their beliefs. The Greek word for fish is ICHTHUS, an acronym that translates “Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior.” Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.4 A map showing the location of Nag Hammadi, a town in modern Egypt where a small library of formerly unknown Gnostic writings was found in 1945.

Figure 8.5 Dedicated in Constantinople in 360 CE, Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) became the seat of authority for the patriarch of Constantinople. The building that presently occupies the site was built between 532 and 537 CE at the direction of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, after the original structure, as well as an earlier replacement, had been destroyed in riots. Source: Reproduced by permission of David R. Bains.

Figure 8.6 A map showing the division of Christianity, east and west, with their respective capitals at Constantinople and Rome. The red dots, plus Rome, are cities where churches were known to have existed before 100 CE.

Figure 8.7 A fourteenth-century Bible depicts the Crusaders being led into battle by Christ himself. Astride a white horse, Christ holds out the Gospel. In his mouth he brandishes a sword, which is both a cross and the word of God. Detail from the Queen Mary Apocalypse, 14th century, MS Royal 19 B XV f. 37. Source: British Library, London.

Figure 8.8 Martin Luther's legendary nailing of the 95 Theses to the door of a Wittenberg Church is celebrated by Protestants as a heroic act of religious liberation. Source: Reproduced by permission of David R. Bains.

Figure 8.9 A lay preacher, known as a circuit rider, makes his preaching rounds on the American frontier in the 1800s. Source: © North Wind Picture Archives / Alamy.

Figure 8.10 Source: Reproduced by permission of David R. Bains.

Figure 8.11 A man is baptized in the Holy Spirit by a Pentecostal minister in a church in Tanzania. Source: Jake Lyell Alamy.

Figure 8.12 Catholic and Orthodox Christians keep eucharistic bread, once it has been consecrated and become the body of Christ, in ornate cases called tabernacles. This particular example is in the shape of a church. The writing on the front (IC XC NIKA) is a Greek abbreviation for "Jesus Christ conquers." Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.13 In accordance with the Orthodox tradition, this Ukrainian church has an iconostasis (screen of icons) between the congregation and the eucharistic table. (The table in front of the screen is

for displaying the relics of saints.) Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.14 A child plays a wise man bearing a gift for Jesus in a nativity play. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.15 Station of the Cross 12. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.16 Station of Cross 13. Source David R. Bains.

Figure 8.17 As in many eastern European countries, these Polish Catholics observe All Saints' Day by visiting the graves of deceased relatives and adorning the cemetery with flowers and candles. Source: Photo by John Thaxter.

Figure 8.18 This icon of Saint Andrew, one of Jesus' original disciples, is illuminated by a hanging votive lamp and stands behind a brass altar containing sand, in which worshipers put tall candles. Source: Will Deming.

Figure 8.19 Since the 1950s, women clergy have become increasingly common in mainline Protestant denominations. Here two female pastors preside over the eucharist celebration. Source: Will Deming.

Chapter 9

The oneness of God. Muslims on pilgrimage surround the Kabah ("Cube") in Mecca, unified in their submission to the one true God. Source: Photo by Fadi El Binni.

Figure 9.1 Most Muslims live in the eastern hemisphere between 10° latitude south and 40° latitude north.