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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Merriam-Webster has put together a marvelous one-volume, easy-to-lift-with-one-hand, desktop encyclopedia on world religions. As with many Webster's publications (e.g., *The Encyclopedia of Literature* and *The Biographical Dictionary*) the editors here have emphasized comprehensiveness (over 3500 articles) and clarity of writing--and added to these a dispassionate, nonjudgmental, and nonproselytizing reporting of religious concepts, movements, figures, divinities, and sacred sites. Edited and written by eminent scholars, this is a portable, authoritative source. Heavily cross referenced, it also includes a handy pronunciation guide, useful for pronouncing non-English words. But editorial restrictions and space limitations have led to some absurdly abbreviated entries, creating uneven or inadequate coverage. The late Reverend Jim Jones has a bigger write-up than Cain; Aum Shinrikyo is discussed more completely than the Essenes; the Tibetan Book of the Dead is explained in two sentences. In the battle between space and content, space has scored many victories; a little of everything wins out over more of fewer things. But for immediate access to authoritative definitions, this book is impeccable. Recommended for all libraries.

-Glenn Norio Masuchika, Chaminade Univ. Lib., Honolulu

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About the Author

For more than 150 years, in print and now online, Merriam-Webster has been America's leading and most-trusted provider of language information. All Merriam-Webster products and services are backed by the largest team of professional dictionary editors and writers in America, and one of the largest in the world.

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