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# Philosophy and religion

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## Buddhism and Jainism

Edited by K.T.S. Sarao and Jeffery D. Long

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Encyclopedia of Indian Religions

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These two sturdy volumes form part of an on-going series – the *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*. A volume on Sikhism is apparently due out. I have no idea how many other volumes there will be. I will be particularly interested to see how they cover those religions which have a long history of involvement in India, but have only tiny minorities of followers – Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, etc. The editor of this journal allowed me to review the *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (Jacobsen, 2009-2014) annually, at great length, as the different volumes appeared (RR 2010/201; RR 2011/150; RR 2012/153; RR 2013/128; RR 2014/203). I hope that *Reference Reviews* will cover this new series in a similar fashion.

Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism have an odd status in India: the Indian constitution recognises Islam as a separate religion, but puts all the others in together as aspects of Hinduism. There is a certain logic to this. In some ways “Hinduism” is a British invention – it was the census of 1,881 that first insisted that respondents who had previously worshipped at the tomb of some local holy man should decide whether he was “Muslim” or “Hindu” and lumped a huge range of different religious practices, centred on a miscellaneous assortment of gods, goddesses and spiritual concepts, into the latter category. There are some ideas in common, lying deep within all of them – the idea of reincarnation; belief in the spiritual value of ablution; the wide acceptance of caste, with Brahmans seen as somehow more holy and a

bottom layer of non-caste peoples; a distaste for meat-eating; and a belief in the value of individual meditation. Islam has a clear message – that there is only one true path to God. Insofar as all these other religions have a common message, it is that there are as many different paths to the same goal as there are living creatures.

Recent years have seen the rise of a more militant and dogmatic form of Hinduism which may lead to changes in this attitude to the other religions. We shall see. In the meantime, here are two volumes detailing aspects of two of them.

I am always annoyed by reference books that do not define their own subjects. If I was reviewing an encyclopedia of candlestick-making I would expect either an introduction explaining the topic, or, by turning to C, to find a lengthy entry with a detailed definition. Nowhere in these two volumes can be found any indication whatsoever of what the editors mean by “Buddhism” or “Jainism”. The book plunges straight in to the extraordinarily complex and arcane vocabulary of Buddhist and Jain theology.

One of the problems of compiling an alphabetical encyclopedia is the amount of duplication necessary. Thus, in this case, the very first entry is for the Abhidamma Pitaka, defined as “The third pitaka of the Pali Tipitaka. The Abhidamma Pitaka is the third pitaka [collection] of the Pali Tipitaka [. . .] It consists of the following seven books: Dhammasangani, Vibhanga, Dhatukatha, Puggalapannatti [. . .]”. There then follows a column or so describing each of these in detail. However, if you look under Dhammasangani, Vibhanga, etc., you will find entries describing them in virtually identical wording. The Dhammasangani, if you want to know, is “the first book of the Abhidamma Pitaka. It enumerates and defines, from a psychological perspective, a number of scattered terms occurring in the Nikayas of the Sutta Pitaka”. It “begins with a matika table of classifications of dhammas”. I assume that all this relates to Buddhism rather than Jainism, though there is absolutely nothing in the entry to say so. Readers who are unfamiliar with the esoteric vocabulary of Indian theology will have to cross-refer to three or four other entries to make sense of any one sentence of this, and then have to cross-refer to make sense of the explanations, *ad infinitum*.

Arranging entries in English alphabetical order when virtually every heading is not English leads to problems of transliteration. Thus, for example, the monk Xuanzang [who I have recently been reading about in the *Encyclopedia of Chinese History* (Dillon, 2017)



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(RR 2017/209)] is famous for having brought many Buddhist teachings to China. I first heard of him under the name Hieun-Tsang, but his name has been transliterated on various occasions as Hsuan Chwang, Hwen Thsang and Yuen Chwang. As his personal name seems to have been Chen Wei this gives an awful lot of places in the alphabetical sequence where we might have found him. He, incidentally, first distinguished himself by translating the *Tattvisiddhi-sastra* and the *Mahayana-samparigraha-sastra* (defined as “a collection of Mahayana sastras ascribed to Asanga”) before going on to greater things – there are four pages here on his life, work and travels, ending up with eight bibliographic references including one to a biography published by Kegan Paul Trench & Trubner in 1914 and therefore not currently widely available.

This journal has reviewed many more accessible reference tools on Buddhism – dictionaries, such as *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Buswell and Lopez, 2014) (RR 2014/207); encyclopedias such as the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (Keown and Prebish, 2007) (RR 2007/314); and online services such as the excellent *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* ([www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/)) (RR 2014/164). Jainism has aroused less public interest in the west, and is therefore less well represented in the reference literature, though the indefatigable Scarecrow Press have, of course, managed a *Historical Dictionary of Jainism* (Wiley, 2004) which we recommended (RR 2005/232). There are also various textbooks and introductions available – one of the editors of this produced a useful basic guide to Jainism (Long, 2009) and I would also note Routledge’s *The Jains* (Dundas, 2005). There are, of course, a much larger number of general introductions to Buddhism. The recent upsurge in public interest in meditation, sparked off by the craze for “mindfulness” is likely to stimulate the production of still more.

These two volumes represent an enormous work of scholarship by about 70 experts, roughly half of them from Western academic institutions and half from the Indian subcontinent. Serious students with an existing in-depth knowledge of Indian theology will find them to be a useful supplement to the free *Digital Dictionary*. Dilettante readers and students with little existing knowledge will find them practically impenetrable, and should look elsewhere. These are not introductory texts.

All public and college libraries in Western countries should have some reference sources on Buddhism, and, if possible, on Jainism. Very few libraries will need this particular

encyclopedia. I can barely think of half-a-dozen in London, so, regretfully, I cannot predict major sales for it.

**Martin Guha**

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Published in online format, as here reviewed, and as a four-volume print set, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Marriage, Family, and Couples Counseling* features 500 signed articles, arranged alphabetically. Information about the editors, Jon Carlson, Adler University (PsyD, EdD, ABPP, recently deceased) and Shannon B. Dermer, Governors State University (PhD), is included in the Front Matter section along with more detailed information listed under “Jon’s Story” and “Shannon’s Story”.

The content falls under five major categories: Reader’s Guide, Entries A to Z, Subject Index, Front Matter and Back Matter, accessible via tabs on the home page. Two search boxes are also included: Search within the Encyclopedia and Starts With.