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## Concise Encyclopedia of Islam (Book Review)

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power on the one hand, and that of reliance-on-other-power on the other hand. In a provocative, and rather startling final observation, he argues that the traditional Western characterization of Buddhism as a basically pessimistic worldview has been inaccurate; in Lester's view, Buddhism is strongly world-affirming (145).

The map and chronology in the front part of the book, and the glossary at the back, are useful in understanding facts concerning Buddhism, and in

*The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*. Cyril Glasse. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., March 1989). Introduction by Huston Smith. Hardcover, 472 pp. \$59.95. Reviewed by Anne C. Kwantes, visiting instructor in history/theology.

Islam is said to be the fastest growing world religion today; it is expected that, by the year 2000, the world's Muslim population will number one billion. In spite of this, Islam is generally not well-known in the United States many Americans are surprised to discover that there are some three million Muslims in the United States. Into this general lack of knowledge regarding Islam Dr. Cyril Glasse's *Encyclopedia* is a welcome newcomer.

*The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* is especially welcome because it is directed at a Western audience, and readable even to a beginning student of Islam. This becomes obvious when, e.g., one notices both Hegiran and Gregorian calendar dates recorded for historic events. The Western reader is given an unexpected bonus in the literal English translation of Arabic terms, furthering an understanding of these terms. Notes (page 7) explain the system of Arabic transliteration as it is used in this volume. Non-Arabic speakers appreciate entries entitled, "Koran," or "Mosque," rather than their Arabic equivalents.

A chronology of significant events in Islamic history forms a convenient and quick reference section; it is featured in fourteen pages towards the end of the book. The many and detailed cross-references

placing this world religion within its context of time and space.

Books on Asian philosophies and religions are often difficult to comprehend. This one is different. One is not expected to have prior knowledge of Buddhism in order to profit from the book's discussions. This volume is in the *Religious Traditions of the World* series, edited by H. Byron Earhart, the well-known scholar in Asian religions. To date, this series includes nine monographs on various religious traditions.

in this volume encourage readers to continue research of their topics, while the five-page bibliography at the end of the *Encyclopedia* offer information concerning other available works on Islam.

Numerous entries (e.g., "Arabic" and "philosophy") constitute comprehensive essays by themselves in both scope and content, while current entries include up-to-date facts and information even of the late 1980s.

This handsomely bound book is made more attractive by its numerous color photographs. Forty-five superb plates exhibit Islamic subjects such as art, architecture, people, and calligraphy, realistically and in vivid color. Maps, schematic presentations, and genealogical tables provide clear illustrations of important themes.

The author, who is affiliated with Columbia University's Department of Middle East Languages and Culture and with the Middle East Institute, has done a real service to students of Islam in presenting the *Encyclopedia*. It is an excellent reference work, is heartily recommended for general reading and more serious research, and will be an asset to any library which houses works on the world's religions.

*Returning: A Spiritual Journey*. Dan Wakefield. New York: Penguin Books, 1989, 250 pp., paperback. Reviewed by James C. Schaap, Associate Professor of English.

Something in Dan Wakefield's spiritual biography, *Returning*, is all too familiar and thus predictable to readers who are professing Christians: his bittersweet Sunday School memories of early childhood, his flirtation with mysterious religious experience in adolescence, his liberation as a

headstrong young scholar who quite gleefully rejects God and all such parochialism once he steps into in the spirited intellectualism of academia.

If there is anything unique about Wakefield's pilgrimage it may be his own *vitae*. Wakefield is a celebrated journalist, screenwriter, and author,