1 Introduction

Sonia Sikka and Ashwani Kumar Peetush

In the West, the distinction between religion and philosophy has been grounded for centuries in an opposition between faith and reason. By now, the equation of religion with faith, understood as a mode of arriving at beliefs that contrasts with reason, has become globally self-evident, to such an extent that the terms "religion" and "faith" are often used interchangeably. Religion as faith, we typically suppose, involves a special kind of trust in divine beings, superhumanly enlightened individuals, revealed texts, clerical authorities, and so forth. Such an attitude of trust would seem to contrast sharply with the reliance on evidence and inference common to the methods of both science and philosophy.[1] In matters of metaphysics, moreover, where the natural sciences may not be able to provide answers, philosophical reasoning is distinguished from faith through commitment to open-ended questioning, refusing allegiance to any confessional creed.[2] To be sure, the history of Christian thought also includes "natural" or "philosophical" theology, relying on reason rather than revelation. As *theology*, however, philosophical theology generally seeks rational justification for what is already believed. That is what distinguishes it from metaphysics. Likewise, philosophy of religion is an affair of reason, but its practitioners do not suppose that the beliefs they are investigating and evaluating are themselves arrived at through philosophical reasoning. They are, after all, *religious* beliefs, the kind held by "believers." Philosophers usually do not see themselves as "believers" in this sense.[3]

Yet many patterns of thought and practice around the world cannot easily be placed on one side or another of a binary equating faith with religion and reason with philosophy. Asian traditions, for example, are notoriously difficult to classify in terms of this Western conceptual map. Elements within ancient Greek philosophy also do not easily fit, contradicting overly hasty and often biased presumptions about the contrast between European and Asian views of knowledge. In addition, some recent wisdom-seeking movements, arising in the West but often heavily inspired by Asian ideas, share with these ancient schools of thought a way thinking and being that treads outside the lines demarcating what we have come to call "religion," in contradistinction to "philosophy."

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The aim of the present volume is to examine a sample of these unclassifiable paths, looking outside the Abrahamic, mainly Christian, religious traditions towards which most philosophy of religion to date has been oriented. In so doing, we seek both to expand discussions about faith within the philosophy of religion and to highlight varieties of wisdom – past, present, and future – that call into question the concepts of philosophy and religion on which our current disciplinary configurations are based. Asian traditions are especially pertinent to this issue, as demonstrated by the chapters in this volume on Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Hindu, and Jain systems of thought and self-transformative practice. We have set these beside chapters on equally unclassifiable examples of ancient Greek philosophy and new spiritual movments to inspire a rethinking of our (modern Western) categories of religion and philosophy and arrive at a better appreciation of the range of options offering knowledge or enlightenment.

This is in part a contribution to the philosophy of religion, helping to widen reflections on religious belief beyond the orientation toward Christianity evident in the majority of published academic work on the subject. Debates about religious belief within this subfield of philosophy typically focus on faith, conceived as a mode of arriving at and living by beliefs that cannot be established by reason or verified by experience.[4] It has been assumed that, while these philosophical discussions take Christianity as their exemplar of religion, being descended from Christian theology and its critical interlocutors, their data and conclusions are applicable to other varieties of religion as well. This assumption cannot be taken for granted, however, given that many religious traditions and ways of being religious do not rest on faith, understood in this sense.[5] Situating these traditions and paths appropriately in relation to ideas of faith derived from Christianity requires examination and philosophical analysis of the roles they accord to trust, reflection, practice, and direct experience.

But such an analysis also leads us to ask whether these paths – Asian and Greek, ancient and new – are rightly understood through the idea of religion at all, given that this idea has taken shape in Western discourses precisely through an opposition between faith and reason. In relation to Asian traditions, the question is especially urgent because the judgment that Asian thought is "religious" has functioned to exclude it wholesale from central subject areas of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, political philosophy, and ethics, as well as from the history of philosophy. The result has been that Asian traditions have not been adequately represented within the discipline of philosophy, either in these areas or in the philosophy of religion. One problem is that the philosophy of religion cannot be made more inclusive simply by inserting a wider number of "religions" into the category slots of the subject as currently constituted. The shapes of the slots themselves need to be altered to fit varieties of beliefs and practices configured differently than Christianity.[6] Such alterations necessarily invite critical reflection on whether the non-Western traditions at issue should be classed

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as religion at all, though, as aspects of them seem closer to Western conceptions of philosophy than of religion or resist being mapped in terms of these categories. The question of the opposition between faith and reason is a crucial one in this context, for "philosophy of religion" is typically conceived as rational inquiry about the content of religious faith,[7] an approach that already poses difficulties for "including" Asian traditions, as well as newer and/or non-affiliated forms of religion, spirituality, and contemplation.

At the same time, efforts to globalize philosophy risk pressing non-Western traditions into a mold that marginalizes some of their essential teachings and goals. Bryan van Norden and Jay Garfield have underlined the Eurocentrism of the discipline as it currently stands, calling for a multiculturalizing of philosophy scholarship and curricula (Garfield and van Norden 2016; van Norden 2017). Garfield's rejection of the term "wisdom traditions" for Asian thought is understandable, in light of his observation that "we don't have departments of wisdom traditions, because we don't value what we take them to be – nonrational exercises in mythopoetic thinking or something like that" (van Norden 2017, xvii). Opposing this kind of prejudice, Garfield and van Norden emphasize the rationality of Asian traditions, often appealing to comparisons with the character of ancient Greek philosophy. Richard King and Sue Hamilton make similar observations about Indian philosophy (King 1999; Hamilton 2001), with Hamilton arguing against the tendency, among Western philosophers, to dismiss it for being, allegedly, " 'mystical,' 'magical,' and anything but rational" (Hamilton 2001, 139).

These observations are fair, but the studies in this volume suggest that Asian philosophical traditions also do not fit the idea of *rationality* that has been employed to distinguish philosophy from religion in the modern Western academy. They simply did not take shape through a division between "religion," understood as faith in authoritative revelation, versus "philosophy," understood as involving independent reflection on questions about knowledge, reality, and ethics.[8] Neither, though, did ancient Greek philosophy, which does seek "wisdom" and contains elements that may count as "religion," depending on what that term is taken to mean. The same is true of many contemporary spiritual and contemplative movements, which reject a particular idea of religion while pursuing self-transformative wisdom through practices and reflections that are also not exactly philosophy, in the modern, Western sense. As to "mysticism," we feel it is better to avoid this term, looking carefully instead at the forms of intuition, insight, and experience to which the label tends to be applied, sometimes in order to dismiss certain phenomena from the serious business of reason.

With respect to Buddhism, for example, the chapters by William Edelglass (Chapter 2) and Bret W. Davis (Chapter 3) point out that the ultimate goal of awakening or enlightenment, for which meditative and moral practices are prescribed as a means, gives "faith" a different character and role within Buddhist traditions than it has within Abrahamic ones. Certainly, reasoned

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reflection on metaphysical and epistemological topics has also been a central part of Buddhist traditions. This fact, combined with atheism, accounts for Buddhism's popular appeal in some circles as a rational alternative to other – allegedly faith-based and therefore irrational – forms of religion. It also grounds well-justified arguments for including Buddhist ideas and thinkers within a properly global philosophical canon. The analyses provided by Edelglass and Davis in their respective chapters suggest, however, that interpretations of Buddhism as a "rational" religion (or philosophy) that rejects faith are based on a particular conception of faith and risk distorting Buddhist traditions by leaving out essential – and also thought-provoking – elements. The problem is that where "philosophy" and "religion" are the only available descriptors and are in turn distinguished through historically and culturally specific conceptions of reason and faith, it becomes difficult to speak accurately about paths of reflection/ knowledge/ wisdom/ enlightenment that do not fit these boxes.

Readers familiar with common classifications of Indian schools of philosophy might be reminded, at this juncture, of the division between *āstika* ("believing") and *nāstika* ("non-believing") schools. Buddhist and Jain schools are generally classified as *nāstika*, given their atheism and rejection of Vedic authority, while the so-called "orthodox Hindu" schools are classified as *āstika* primarily due to their acceptance of the authority of Vedic texts. This classification might tempt one to draw the contrast between *āstika* and *nāstika* through a concept of religious belief that assimilates the meaning of *āstika* to faith in scriptural authority. As Anne Vallely points out in her chapter on Jainism (Chapter 4), however, right faith, knowledge, and conduct are interwoven components of the Jain path and are not seen as conflicting. Vallely's ethnographic work among Jain renouncers and householders reveals a relation to "faith" and "reason" that does not place these in opposition to one another within the quest for liberation that is the ultimate goal of Jain spiritual pursuits. In this respect, it joins the discussions of Buddhism offered by Bret W. Davis and William Edelglass in making a place for faith within these allegedly "unbelieving" traditions.

At the same time, these accounts show that, within Buddhist and Jain traditions, "faith" – or the concept most closely resembling it – does not equal acceptance of doctrines that are supposed to be revealed in scripture and cannot be verified independently, either through direct experience or rational inference. In that case, the distinction between *āstika* and *nāstika* is also less clear than it may at first seem. In Chapter 5, Ashwani Kumar Peetush traces the genealogy of the equation of philosophy with reason and religion with faith to Enlightenment Europe. He argues that the exclusion of Advaita Vedānta from the Western philosophical canon is the result of two factors: first, Euro-Western philosophy's self-definition as "victory" over faith and the abuses of power by the Church, and second, a theory of racial hierarchy, where non-European peoples are thought to be incapable of reason, the kind which makes possible philosophy. At the same

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time, Peetush argues that non-EuroWestern philosophies are often not seen as truly "religious" either, since they are not founded in Judeo-Christian understandings of self, God, and world; hence there is no need to investigate these in the philosophy of religion. Peetush argues that Advaita problematizes Enlightenment conceptions of both philosophy and religion. Advaita Vedānta's idea of God as the innermost self, whose existence can be corroborated through direct experience, gives "faith" a position within Advaita Vedānta that makes its approach to truth not so different from Buddhist and Jain ones. All of these traditions outline paths that travel beyond reason, and they propose the need for something like faith in order to reach the destination that is their ultimate goal. This is not faith in the existence of a transcendent deity, however, nor is it belief, on the basis of revelation, in doctrines that reason cannot establish or that no one on this side of death could ever know are true. Where such notions of faith are used to distinguish religion from philosophy, Buddhism, Jainism, and Advaita Vedānta will inevitably be distorted if placed on one side or another of this categorial divide.

In a different way, that is also true of Ruism, in the West popularly termed "Confucianism." In Chapter 6, "Ruism and the Category of Religion: Or, What to Do About the Confucians?", Paul Carelli and Sarah Mattice ask: When tourists visit the 孔廟 Kongmiao and 國子監 Guozijian (Temple of Confucius and Imperial College) in Beijing, is what they are doing "religious"? What if they are deeply filial toward their parents, study hard, and have a general sense of cosmic moral optimism? When a tradition has been described everywhere on the spectrum from "secular humanist philosophy" to "profoundly religious," where can we begin in trying to make sense of the challenges and benefits of a particular categorization? Carelli and Mattice are guided by these questions in their attempt to situate Ruism in relation to the category of "religion" as constructed and applied in a European context. They note that the faith/reason binary is largely absent from Ruist tradition, and they reference original ethnographic research suggesting that "religion" is also not the category through which people in China are inclined to understand Ruism, for a variety of reasons. There are elements in Ruism, such as the concept of 天 *tian* (the heavens, sky, nature), which one might be tempted to assimilate to a transcendent realm in which a person is supposed to have faith. A closer examination, however, speaks against such assimilation, though it does not validate the positioning of Ruism exclusively as moral philosophy. Again, the problem is the attempt to situate *all* traditions of thought and practice on a conceptual map whose historical construction – and relativity – is not always understood. Ruism is perhaps not rightly understood as a "faith," but approaching it as a religion may nonetheless have advantages, capturing more aspects of Ruism within lived experience than does the label "philosophy."

In part, the misfit of these Asian traditions with the modern Western concept of philosophy rests in the fact that they do involve lived experience,

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offering ideals and guidelines for how a person should be, not just at the level of theory but in practice. The Daoist notion of *wu-wei* ("non-action," "effortless action") is another example of such an ideal that is equally difficult to define as either religion or philosophy. In Chapter 7, Julianne Chung notes that the *Zhuangzi* uses skeptical arguments to call into question conventional ways of thinking and acting, encouraging readers to consider alternative approaches captured in this philosophical and religious ideal of *wu-wei* 無為. She examines the interpretation of *wu-wei* as a *kind* of submission to faith, but in a sense of acting "as if" that supports a fictionalist interpretation of Zhuangzi's perspective on discourse and can help to resolve paradoxes in Buddhist and Confucian thought as well.

Gordon Davis likewise connects religion with fiction in arguing that aesthetic features lie at the heart of religious discourse and its paradigmatically spiritual significance and that religious forms of the aesthetic do not require either faith or doctrine (Chapter 8). Davis applies Nelson Goodman's account of aesthetic discourse and symbolism across a range of religious traditions, with a focus on Indo-Tibetan and other South Asian traditions of Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhists, he points out, often explain their own tales of extraordinary powers as mere pedagogical expedients (called *upaya*: "skilful means"), but they are not alone in advancing discursive tropes that do not even purport to be veridical. What, we might ask, does faith mean in cases where it does *not* mean holding-for-true?

These studies of a variety of Asian traditions highlight difficulties in defining them through the faith/reason binary that is supposed to distinguish religion from philosophy. Readers familiar with Greek philosophy, however, will notice that many of the points they raise also apply to ancient Greek thought and culture. Indeed, Carelli and Mattice note that, in their approach to the gods, the ancient Greeks stressed participation in beneficial social ritual rather than private belief. They also argue that, through his depiction of Socrates, Plato views philosophy as extending rather than opposing such "religious" practice. It is important to understand that the use of the religion/philosophy binary to differentiate "Western" philosophy from "Eastern" religion falsifies not only the complex character of Asian traditions but also the European ones that have been placed at the origins of philosophical reasoning within Western narratives.

Anna Lännström agrees with Carelli and Mattice in stressing the role of ritual in ancient Greek culture and calling for a reconsideration of Socrates as emblematic of philosophical reason (Chapter 10). Socrates' trust in the *daimionon* is an act of faith, Lännström argues, as it cannot be fully justified by supporting evidence and seems to be in tension with his emphasis on acting in accordance with reason. But we should also be careful to understand that the categories of faith and reason are not altogether appropriate either for Socrates or for the religion of ordinary Greeks, whose religious experience was not primarily focused on beliefs and their justification. On the basis of this analysis, Lännström questions the stereotype of religion as

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founded on blind adherence to authority, along with the hard line philosophers tend to draw between the form of belief that characterizes religion, on the one hand, and that which characterizes their self-conception of philosophy, on the other. Perhaps, she suggests, we would do better to stay away from talk of "faith" altogether in the analysis of religious beliefs, simply asking, instead, what the central and fundamental assumptions are of any set of beliefs and how they might be justified.

There are in addition ancient Greek philosophical paths that strongly resemble the paths towards liberation outlined in the chapters on Buddhism and Vedānta in this volume. Plotinus, whose philosophy forms the subject of Catherine Collobert's study (Chapter 11), is a notable example. Like Śaṅkara, Plotinus conceives of philosophy as a spiritual journey towards reunification. For this journey, reason would seem to be an obstacle rather than a help, but Plotinus makes use of arguments and demonstrations. He ultimately presents a cooperative relationship between faith and reason as critical to the journey, while its ultimate goal goes beyond both. Collobert's analysis of the concept of *pistis*, meaning trust, confidence, conviction, or persuasion, shows that faith does not stand in an oppositional relation to reason here. Rather, the dichotomy, if there is one, is between reason as *dianoia* (discursive thought) and *noêsis* (intuition), though in fact these also work together. Thus, *pistis* would appear play a role similar to that of *śraddhā* within Buddhist teachings, as presented by Edelglass. The path involves an attempt to comprehend the simple reality which is said to be the source and substance of both the world and the self and which can therefore be grasped "inwardly" through intuition, a form of direct experience. Such ideas are sometimes labelled as "mysticism," but there is nothing irrational or supernatural about the kind of vision described by Plotinus or Śaṅkara. In both cases, reason is seen as capable of establishing the coherence of the metaphysics that posits a simple underlying reality common to self and world, although it cannot convey the experience or intuition of it.

If the distant past of "philosophy" in the West includes paths that resist the faith/reason binary, there are trends suggesting that the future of "religion" may do so as well. There has been considerable sociological study in recent years of people who characterize themselves as "spiritual but not religious," for instance, or who mark "none" when asked about their religious affiliation (Fuller 2001; Heelas 2008; Funk and Smith 2012). Such studies reveal patterns of belief, experience, and practice that also cannot be captured by a concept of religion according to which being religious necessarily means belonging to an established faith community or accepting a body of doctrines. These new and unaffiliated forms of religion and spirituality, which often integrate Asian ideas, negotiate questions of faith and reason in ways that existing discussions of these questions within the philosophy of religion fail to address. They commonly reject the label of "religion" altogether in favour of the descriptor "spiritual," raising questions about what,

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precisely, religion is supposed to be, and whether we need new terms to capture the nature of current contemplative and self-transformative paths.

The final three chapters of this volume examine the place of faith and reason within some of these paths, which negotiate worldviews and methods of self-transformation in intriguing ways, creatively drawing on a wide range of resources and prompting us to reconsider essentialist understandings of what religion must be. Some theologians and cultural commentators, and a few philosophers as well, have criticized new "spiritual" movements as reflecting a consumerist culture that transforms religion from being a profound source of meaning and community into a smorgasboard offering quick satisfaction of shallow and shifting preferences. Sonia Sikka argues in Chapter 11, however, that a closer look at studies of the "spiritual but not religious" (SBNR) reveals, in many cases, a highly serious rejection of "religion" as equivalent to "faith" in two senses of the latter term. First, many SBNRs reject the imperative to respect the authority of particular texts and institutions that has been a hallmark of organized religion. Second, they reject the insistence on commitment to a single and exclusive historically constituted bundle of belief and practice. These rejections of religion qua faith, Sikka suggests, are not only philosophically respectable, but in fact more rational in their way of negotiating beliefs and practices than are traditional forms of religiosity which suppose that being "religious" is equivalent to being a faithful follower of a given religion.

Many of the ideas entertained by SBNRs in the studies Sikka examines are indebted to Asian traditions of metaphysics and meditation. That is also true of the techniques and practices discussed by Erin McCarthy in her study of contemplative education (Chapter 12). McCarthy points out that Contemplative Education explicitly does not require students to "believe" in any religious doctrines, but it also does not solely emphasize the "third person" learning, associated with reason and objectivity, that is the norm in higher education. Rather, contemplative education engages not only third person (objective) and second person (intersubjective) modes of knowing but also critical first person or subjective ways of knowing. Discussing the Buddhist roots of contemplative education as well as feminist philosophy and pedagogy, McCarthy explores how Contemplative Education works in a secular university setting to disrupt the faith/reason dichotomy.

In her study of emerging worldviews within the category of "nonreligion," Lori Beaman presents another arena where this dichotomy is being challenged. In the final chapter of this volume, she considers social actions taking place in the context of the current environmental crisis, reflecting on how the worldview accompanying these actions defies the binary system we use to code the world in terms of religious/spiritual or science/reason. Precipitated by the environmental crisis, this worldview has several elements: a reliance or drawing upon science; an expansive understanding of community; a discourse of equality and a commitment to creating new models for living well together (including non or "other than human" animals); a

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recognition of the beauty of the world; and a focus on the immanent. Beaman's case study identifies and analyzes a broader pattern, showing how complex the category of "nonreligion" actually is.

Thus, by examining Asian philosophies (using the term "philosophy" in an appropriately revised sense) alongside ancient Greek views and recent trends within nonreligion, we bring into relief forms of reflection and practice for which there is currently no proper characterization or name within modern Western languages. The definitional problem is partly due, we suggest, to the fact that there is no place for these paths on the conceptual map that distinguishes philosophy from religion through the binary of faith vs. reason. Recognizing this point is important for the philosophy of religion because, if philosophers of religion are to raise appropriate evaluative questions about the epistemological and ontological claims of those who teach and walk these paths, the questions have to be based on an accurate representation of their character. Such a representation may also challenge the concept of religion, however, inviting us to consider possible ways of being in the world that do not fit currently predominant ideas of either religion or philosophy.

Notes

1 The so-called "new atheists" certainly assume this idea of religion, with Richard Dawkins defining it as "some combination of authority, revelation, tradition and scripture" (Dawkins 1997, 397). But more sympathetic and nuanced assessments of religious belief also conceive of it as tied to the special authority of particular texts and traditions. See, for instance, Waldron 1993.

2 That is why Heidegger claims the idea of a "Christian philosophy" is a "round square" (Heidegger 1987, 8). His position has been criticized as too rigidly excluding reason from religion, which Heidegger understands (sympathetically) as a life of faith, but it would be hard to imagine as "Christian" a form of philosophical questioning that did not start with epistemic commitment to key doctrines, such as (at least) the existence of God.

3 Where they do, and their approach is guided by this stance, it is fair to ask, as John Schellenberg does, whether the resulting "philosophy of religion" is truly philosophy or a disguised form of Christian apologetics (Schellenberg 2009).

4 These discussions comprise a variety of topics. One is the relation between belief and evidence. Classic sources on this question are Hume 1776 and Clifford 1879; Clark and Van Arragon 2011 provide a collection of contemporary essays. A closely related topic concerns the reasonability of pragmatic and affective grounds for belief, revolving around the well-known arguments of Pascal (§233 of the *Pensées* 1670) and William James ("The Will to Believe" 1896). Examples include Martin 1983; Rescher 1985; Jordan 1994; Wainwright 1995; Garber 2009, among many others. Another discussion, instigated by Alvin Plantinga's analysis of warranted belief, debates whether religious beliefs may be held to be properly basic (Plantinga 1983, 2000; Grigg 1983, 1990; Swinburne 2001). There are also analyses of dispositions such as acceptance, trust and hope as possible ways of interpreting the stance of faith (Alston 1996; Smith 1979; Pojman 1986), as well as proposals for non-doxastic models according to which faith involves commitment but not necessarily belief (Audi 2011; Schellenberg 2012).

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5 For instance, as John Hick notes, "'faith' is a term that is more at home in the Semitic than in the Indian family of traditions" (Hick 1985, 29). Such observations about faith link to a wider concern about the parochial character of the very concept of religion upon which the study of it in various academic disciplines has been based (Masuzawa 2005; Nongbri 2013). Within the philosophy of religion, recent discussions have problematized the fact that this field lacks inclusivity and is dominated by Christian apologetics due to its historical origins in Western theology (Knepper 2013; Schellenberg 2009).

6 This consideration leads Griffith-Dickson (2005) to radically revise the subject headings traditionally employed within philosophy of religion textbooks. It is also central to a major project currently underway, led by Gereon Kopf and Tim Knepper, to produce a textbook on "Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion" (https://papers.aarweb.org/content/global-critical-philosophy-religion-seminar).

7 The philosophy of religion is itself a rational enterprise, of course, but its approach does not suppose that religious believers themselves arrive at the content of their beliefs through philosophical reasoning.

8 S. Radhakrishnan, in the introduction to his classic work on Indian philosophy, notes that "philosophy in India is essentially spiritual" and that "religion in India is not dogmatic" (Radhakrishnan 1999, 25). Krishna Sharma likewise argues for the untenability of the Western separation of religion from philosophy, which positions religion as "a matter of faith and emotion and not of knowledge and reason" (Sharma 1987, 9). Arvind Sharma points out that "Buddhism is opposed to revelation *per* se as the valid basis of religion," but he adds that "its reliance on reason is also not so thoroughgoing as to allow us to satisfactorily describe it only as a philosophy, especially if philosophy is defined in terms of its reliance on reason" (Sharma 1997, 2–3). Sharma goes some way toward laying a basis for relating Buddhism to the concepts of revelation and faith that define Western, largely Christian, ideas of religion (Sharma 1997, 73–104), employing the work of John Hick.

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