

Neil Wenborn  
**Religions of the World**

Read by **Adrian Grove**

**JUNIOR  
CLASSICS**



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1	Ever since humans became thinking creatures...	2:50
2	<b>Judaism</b>	6:12
3	The Torah is the most important book in Judaism...	7:34
4	Many of the traditional festivals of Judaism...	8:03
5	<b>Christianity</b>	6:47
6	For many years Christians faced persecution...	7:42
7	With so many different churches...	7:12
8	<b>Islam</b>	5:25
9	In the years after Muhammed's first revelation...	6:40
10	The fourth of the Five Pillars is fasting...	5:05
11	The Five Pillars of Islam are the duty of all Muslims...	5:34
12	<b>Hinduism</b>	4:08
13	The Hindu sacred texts are probably the world's...	6:14

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14	Vishnu is the preserver of the universe...	6:01
15	The <i>Ramayana</i> tells the story...	5:17
16	<b>Buddhism</b>	7:37
17	The third of the Noble Truths...	6:53
18	Mahayana Buddhism developed...	7:50
19	<b>Sikhism</b>	6:37
20	Amar Das' successor was the fourth Guru...	4:10
21	Guru Tegh Bahadur's son Gobind Singh...	4:14
22	As well as the five Ks...	6:49
23	<b>Daoism and Confucianism</b>	6:23
24	Daoism is the religion of the Dao...	5:17
25	<b>Shinto</b>	6:39
26	Most followers of Shinto go to a shrine to worship...	5:32

**Total time: 2:39:05**

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## Neil Wenborn

# Religions of the World

A procession winds its way through the streets of an English town, led by five bearded men wearing blue turbans and ceremonial swords. Above an ancient marketplace in Morocco a haunting call to prayer goes out at dawn from a 12th-century minaret. On a riverbank in India millions of people gather to bathe and launch floating candles on the surface of the water.

What do these scenes have in common? And how do they relate to the yellow-robed figure sitting, silent and cross-legged, in front of a centuries-old monument in south-east Asia? What do they share with the eight-branched candelabrum that burns in houses all over the world in the darkest days of winter? Or with the crowds gathered in spring sunshine below the balcony of a great basilica in the middle of Rome?

The answer is that they are all expressions of religious belief – a few of the myriad ways in which, through

the millennia, humankind has sought to find meaning in our lives on this planet and in the vast universe beyond it. For thousands of years we have looked at the world around us in wonder and awe. For thousands of years we have asked ourselves how we got here and where we are going. We have seen great pain and suffering, but we have also seen great goodness and love. And we have asked ourselves how best to live our lives in this ever-changing and often unsatisfactory world.

Among the most enduring answers to these questions are the answers we have found in the great religions. Those answers are as varied as the ceremonies and rituals of the religions themselves, and the differences between them have sometimes been a source of bitter conflict. But religious belief has also been a source of comfort and support to countless people throughout the ages, and it continues to be so today.

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The origins of religion lie deep in the history of our species. Nowadays we are used to getting news of events almost as they happen. No sooner is there an earthquake or a riot somewhere in the world than we see pictures of it on television or over the internet. Thousands of words are written about it by hundreds of commentators and are broadcast to millions of people around the globe. But it is only in the last few years of human history that this has been the case. For most of our time on the planet we lived in small groups which had little or no contact with people beyond their own communities. Few people could read or write their own language, let alone understand the languages of others. News travelled by word of mouth and very slowly. It is because most religions took shape in times like these that there are often different stories about how they began and what their early followers did and thought. Different people have always had different ideas about these stories and how they should be understood. The scriptures of the different religions are full of wonderful happenings that make

us want to ask the question, 'Can this be true?' But even this question means different things to different people. For some people it is like asking, 'Is this wonderful news report true?' For others it is more like asking, 'Is this wonderful piece of music true?'

*Religions of the World* looks at Judaism, Christianity and Islam; at Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism; and at Shinto, Taoism and Confucianism. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are sometimes called the Abrahamic faiths, because they all claim descent from the patriarch Abraham, who probably lived some 18 centuries before the birth of Jesus. Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism all grew up in India and have since spread around the world. Shinto is the traditional religion of Japan, and Taoism and Confucianism are the traditional religions of China.

In this audiobook we shall hear about how these great religions began and how they have evolved to hold the places that they do in today's world. We shall learn about their scriptures and what these tell us about the beliefs and hopes of their

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followers. We shall meet some of the remarkable men and women who have changed the course of religious history and shall see how their insights and devotion have shaped the way people worship and the way they live their everyday lives. And we shall be spectators at some of the inspiring festivals and ceremonies which celebrate key events in the history of the different faiths, or which mark the stages of human life as we move from birth through childhood and adulthood to old age and death.

Different faiths have different understandings of time, and these different understandings are reflected in different calendars. For example, the year Christians call AD 2000 is called 5760 AM in the Jewish calendar and 1420 AH in the Islamic calendar. This means that the traditional Western dating system, which uses BC and AD, actually has its roots in a single religion, Christianity: BC stands for 'Before Christ' and AD for 'Anno Domini', Latin for 'In the year of our Lord'. When comparing the history of different religions, therefore, scholars in the West often use the terms BCE and

CE instead. CE stands for Common Era and BCE for Before Common Era, but the numbering of the years remains the same – 2000 BC becomes 2000 BCE, for example, and 2000 AD becomes 2000 CE. As the followers of different religions talk to each other and learn more about each other's faith, this dating system is being used more widely, and it is the one you will find in this audiobook.

*Religions of the World* is an introduction to some of the faiths which have helped to shape the world we live in today. Wherever you go – from North America to the Far East, from Northern Europe to Sub-Saharan Africa – you will find their living legacy. Their sacred writings, and the events they recount, may have their origins in the distant past; but the faiths remain part of the lives of billions of people across the globe – and for many the most important part of all.

### **Notes by Neil Wenborn**

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**The music on this recording is taken from the  
NAXOS, CELESTIAL HARMONIES and FWBO catalogues:**

Judaism

**OUT OF BABYLON** SHEMA YISREAL / SHOMER YISREAL 13274-2  
Traditional

Christianity

**CHRISTMAS CAROLS** SILENT NIGHT 8.550589  
Worcester Cathedral Choir; Donald Hunt, conductor

**IN PASSIONE ET MORTE DOMINI** HYMNUS 8.550952  
Nova Schola Gregoriana; Alberto Turco, director

Islam

**THE MUSIC OF ISLAM, VOL. 10: QU'RAN RECITATION** 13150-2  
EZAN (CALL TO PRAYER)  
Traditional

Hinduism

**DANCING TO THE FLUTE** 13135-2  
DEVOTION (PART 1) (RAGA BHAIRAVA) / SHIVA (CHAUTAL TALA)  
Traditional

Buddhism

**ITHI KHO BIKKHAVE – BUDDHIST CHANTS** FWBO  
TI RATANA VANDANA / DHAMMAPALAM GATHA  
Arthamitra

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**TIBET SHERAB LING MONKS: SACRED TIBETAN CHANT**

76044–2

MAHAKALA PUJA – INVOCATION AND OFFERING TO MAHAKALA

Traditional

Sikhism

SATNAAM WAHEGURU / AUM WAHEGURU (SMARAN STHALI)

Private recording

Daoism and Confucianism

**THE HUGO MASTERS, VOL. 3**

13044–2

AUTUMN MEDITATION AT DRESSING

Ci-wen Du

Shinto

**THE ART OF THE SHAKUHACHI, VOL. 1 MUKAIJI**

13224–2

Traditional

**Music programming by Mike Shah**

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**Neil Wenborn** is a freelance writer and publishing consultant, whose work has appeared in both Britain and the United States. Co-editor of the highly respected *History Today Companion to British History* (Collins & Brown) and *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge University Press), he has also written biographies of Haydn and Stravinsky, and is the author of *Dvořák* and *Mendelssohn* in Naxos's 'Life and Music' series. He has also written *The French Revolution – In a Nutshell* for Naxos AudioBooks. Other publications include a study of Jane Austen's *Emma* (humanities-ebooks.co.uk). A collection of his award-winning poetry, *Firedoors*, is published by Rockingham Press.



**Adrian Grove** trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre school. He has worked extensively for BBC Radio including *Falco*, *The Archers*, *The Admirable Crichton* and *Robinson Crusoe*. His theatre credits include Clyde in *Dying Breed* and MacHeath in *The Threepenny Opera* at Bristol Theatre Royal, Martin in *Newfoundland* at Bath Theatre Royal, Arkady in *A Month in the Country* at the Tobacco Factory, Bristol and Cougar Glass in *Fastest Clock in the Universe* at the Alma Theatre, Bristol. His film credits include Chris Boardman in *The Flying Scotsman* (MGM Films) and his television credits include John Nolan in *Casualty*. He has read several audiobooks. In 2008 he won the Stephen Sondheim Performer of the Year award. This is his first reading for Naxos AudioBooks.

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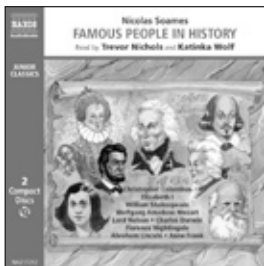
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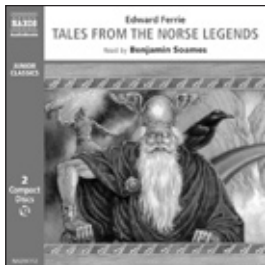
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Neil Wenborn

# Religions of the World

**Judaism • Christianity • Islam • Hinduism • Buddhism  
Sikhism • Shinto • Daoism • Confucianism**

Read by **Adrian Grove**

Religion is central to the lives of millions of people around the globe. But how did the great religions begin, and what do their followers believe? *Religions of the World* tells the remarkable story of some of the faiths which have helped to shape the way we live today. Aimed at younger listeners, it introduces the history and scriptures, beliefs and customs of some of humanity's most enduring religious traditions, and looks at their place in the lives of men, women and children across the world.

**PRESENTED WITH MUSIC FROM THE DIFFERENT FAITHS**



**Neil Wenborn** is a writer and publishing consultant. He has written biographies of Haydn and Stravinsky, as well as *The French Revolution – In a Nutshell* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Adrian Grove** trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre school. He has worked extensively for BBC Radio, as well as in film, television and the theatre.

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