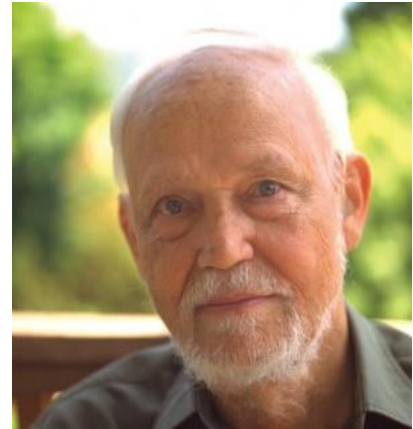


Remembering Huston Smith

by Jack Lloyd / Originally published in Spirit Journal January 2017

Just before 2017 arrived, Huston Smith died at the age of 97 at his home in Berkeley, California. Smith was born to Methodist missionaries in 1919, in Suzhou, China. His lengthy [obituary](#) in the *New York Times* described him as, “a renowned scholar of religion who pursued his own enlightenment in Methodist churches, Zen monasteries and even Timothy Leary’s living room.”



Among many books and articles, Smith was the author of “The World’s Religions” (1958) a classic study that helped open Western minds to the unity-within-diversity of global spiritual traditions. This great book has sold more than three million copies and continues to be used in many university comparative religion classes today.

God has to speak to each person in their own language, in their own idioms. Take Spanish, Chinese. You can express the same thought, but to different people you have to use a different language. It's the same in religion. - Huston Smith

An ordained Methodist minister, Smith was noted for taking a direct, participatory approach to his study of religious traditions -- for example, according to the *Times*, “he meditated with Tibetan Buddhist monks, practiced yoga with Hindu holy men, whirled with ecstatic Sufi Islamic dervishes, chewed peyote with Mexican Indians and celebrated the Jewish Sabbath with a daughter who had converted to Judaism.”

In remembrance of Huston Smith, the magazine *Parabola* re-published a [1976 interview](#) with him that makes very interesting reading.